Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature No. 40

Ben Jonson

VOLPONE OR THE FOX

* General Introduction
* Introduction to Volpone
* Text
* Paraphrase
* Notes & Explanations
* Questions with Answers

Prof. Bashir Hussain M.A.

KITAB MAHAL
URDU BAZAR
LAHORE (W. PAKISTAN)

Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature No. 40

BEN JONSON

VOLPONE
OR
THE FOX

Containing,

Introduction, Text, Paraphrase, Notes, Explanations & Questions with Answers.

Prof :- Bashir Hussain M. A.

Pr 00

Kitab Mahal

URDU BAZAR LAHORE—(W.Pak)

PUBLISHED BY
SHAKOOR MOHAMMAD
MANAGER
KITAB MAHAL
LAHORE.

Printed at :-
ACADEMIC PRINTING PRESS,
LAHORE.

Contents

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

LIFE OF BEN JONSON

Benjamin or Ben Jonson, was born in Westminster in the early part of the year 1574. His grandfather was a man of some family and fortune, and originally settled at Annandale, in Scotland, from which place he removed to Carlisle, and was subsequently taken into the service of Henry VIII. His father, who was probably at the court, suffered a long imprisonment under Queen Mary, and was finally deprived of his estate.

Jonson was a posthumous child. His step-father, a master bricklayer, sent young Jonson to Westminster School, where Camden, a name dear to literature, was then the second master. Young Jonson naturally fell under his care, and he was not slow in discovering, nor negligent in cultivating, the extraordinary talents of his pupil, Jonson, who had a warm and affectionate heart, and ever retained an extraordinary degree of respect for his old master, thus addresses him in his Epigrams :

"Camden most reverend head, to whom I owe
All that I am in arts, and all I know—"

and in his dedication of 'Every Man in his Humour', he tells his most learned and honoured friend, that he "is not one of those who can suffer the benefit conferred upon his youth to perish with his age," and he adds that 'in accepting the comedy, he will find no occasion to repent of having been his instructor."

Unfortunately, however, the financial condition of his family prevented Jonson from continuing his studies further. On returning to his parents, he was immediately taken into the business of his step-father, under whom began to work as an apprentice. But he could not endure the occupation of a bricklayer. So he volunteered for service in Flanders, where he remained until about 1592.

Jonson brought little from Flanders, but the reputation of a brave man, a smattering of Dutch, and an empty purse. His mother was still alive, and it has been supposed that Jonson took up his abode in her house. He was in no mood to live upon the scanty resources of his poor mother, and he therefore, adopted the resolution of turning his education to what account he could, and like most of the poets, his contemporaries, seeking a subsistence from the stage. He thus became an actor in London, producing his first play, 'Every Man in his Humour', in 1598; 'The Case is Altered' belongs probably to the same year. In 1598 also Jonson came into public notice, when, after, a duel with a fellow-actor, whom he killed, he was indicted for man-slaughter, but liberated on pleading benefit to clergy.

The year 1599 saw the production of 'Every Man Out of his Humour', a less popular comedy, which with 'Cynthia's Revels', 1600, marked the opening of the stage war between Jonson and his fellow-playwrights. Jonson returned to the attack with 'The Poetaster', 1601, but the war ended in 1602, and he then turned to tragedy, 'Sejanus' 1603, was his first and great tragedy, and with the accession of James I, Jonson was established by his thirty masques and court entertainments as probably the most successful and certainly not the least versatile of writers for the Jacobean stage. The king, however,took offence at references to the Scots in 'Eastward Hoe', 1605; as a result of this, Jonson suffered a short term of imprisonment. In the same year he took some obscure part in inquiries, relative to the Gunpowder Plot.

The period that followed was marked by the production of his greatest classical comedies: 'Volpone', 1606; 'Epicoene', or 'The Silent Woman', 1609; and 'The Alchemist, 1610; and by that of his second tragedy, 'Catiline', 1611. Honoured by a royal pension and by the patronage of noble lords in plenty, he produced no further works of a high order, although he continued to write. His later comedies include 'The Staple of News', 1626; The New Inn', 1629; and a 'Tale of a Tub', 1633' At the end of his life, he was deserted by both patronsnao

satellites, and he died in comparative poverty, on August 6, 1637. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a tablet bearing the celebrated inscription, "O rare Ben Jonson", prepetuates his memory.

Jonson's love of conviviality has been noted by many critics. His attachment to wine he never-denied ; indeed he seems to have pleased himself with exaggerating his foibles, and playing into the hands of his enemies. That he had a lofty opinion of himself may be allowed ; indeed, he never affected to conceal it ; but this did not lead to any undue contempt of others, as may be seen by what he says of Camden, (Selden, and an infinite number besides, whose names occur in his 'Underwoods', 'Epigrams', and smaller pieces. In truth, this self-complacency frequently attends great learning ; and Ben Jonson's learning was of gigantic bulk.

Age and infirmity had little effect upon the general bent of Jonson's temper. Though his prevailing camplaint, which was of a paralytic nature, must have occasionally affected his mind and debilitated his understanding, yet he continued frank and sociable to the end.

From a retrospect of what has been said, an opinion may be formed of the frailties and defects, as well as of the excellencies of this eminent man without much hazard and error. It yet remains to say a few words on his poetical career. Jonson's knowledge of human nature was extensive and profound. He was familiar with the various combinations of the humours and affections, and with nice and evanescent tints by which the extremes of opposing qualities melt into one another, and are lost to the vulgar eye; but the art which he possessed in perfection, was that of marking in the happiest manner the different shades of the same quality, in different minds, so as to descriminate the voluptuous from the voluptuous, and the covetous from the covetous, etc. He was excellent in what is known as "picturing". His characters are delineated with a breadth and vigour as well as truth that display a master-hand ; his figures stand prominent on the canvas, bold and muscular, though not elegant: his attitudes, though sometimes ungraceful, are always just, while his

strict observation of proportion occasionally mellowed the hard and rigid tone of his colouring by the mere force of symmetry gave a warmth to the whole, as pleasing as it was unexpected.

It is, indeed, the rarity of Jonson's genius on which all critics insist. At a time when other dramatists were forming English comedy with romantic and pastoral scenes and richly humorous character, Jonson was returning to the classical ideals, by which comedy is made a didactic vehicle for the ridicule of contemporary 'types'. For this reason full appreciation of his humour was necessarily confined to contemporaries who were able to recognize the skill of his portraiture. Jonson, who was revered in his own day largely for his masterful character, ruled the convivial gatherings at the Mermaid Tavern and impressed the younger writers with something of the power that Dr. Jonson had in a later age. As a critic, he was just but somewhat harsh, while as a poet he was able to turn the deepest learning into the most charming verses, a witness his poem to Diana, his 'Drink to Me Onlys and his commendatory verses for the first Shakespear' folio.

"If we look upon Jonson while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works, you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him! but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such a hieght. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them; there is scarce a poet

or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline'. But he has done his robberies so openly that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers, he so represents old Rome to us in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps too he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them; wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. ......To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his 'Discoveries', we have as many and as profitable rules for perfecting the stage as any wherewith the French can furnish us." (*Dryden : Essay on Dramatic Poetry'*).

EARLY HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMA

"The beginnings of the drama in England are obscure. There is evidence that when the Romans were in England, they established vast amphitheatres, for the production of plays, but when the Romans departed, their theatre departed with them. The earliest records, of acting in the Middle Ages are concerned not with plays but with individual players, clowns, tumblers, and minstrels. Of these the most important is the 'minstrel,' who is al ink between the Anglo-Saxon 'scop,' who sang the long poems of heroes, and the later theatre......Officially. the hand of the Church was against him, and there was little hope that his soul would be saved from damnation......If the Church did not look kindly upon the minstrels, and their less reputable companions, it was the Church itself that brought back the drama into England. The Church had condemned the theatre of the Roman Empire, and its spectacles and themes gave every reason for such an attack. Yet the ritual of the Church had itself something dramatic within it, and by the tenth

century that ritual extended into the rudiments of a play." (*Ifor Evans*).

The indigenous dramatic activity took its rise from the religion of the time. The Church was ready and eager to provide for the people all the amusements as well as the spiritual uplifting which it could by means of art and letters. In fact, it was eager to show to an uneducated folk the Scriptural story in visible wise, thus counteracting the lack of vernacular versions of the Holy Writ.

Let us take the Mass for instance. The whole of this service with its accompanying ritual is a symbolic representation of the most arresting episodes in the life of Christ, and it is but natural that the clergy should have attempted to make it even more outwardly symbolic as the knowledge of Latin among the ordinary people passed farther and farther into the background.

The first step in the development of this crude form of ritual into a proper drama was naturally the gradual introduction of the dialogue and the action into little Latin playlets,a step marked by several extant manuscripts in France. The second was the introduction of the vernacular into the midst of the Latin verse. This shows that the drama was slowly moving towards the people. The third step is the composition of purely vernacular plays, acted still within the Church. Of these only fragmentary examples of English workmanship have been preserved, although there are extant in French a 'Sponsus', telling the story of the wise and foolish virgins.

As we can well imagine, the subject-matter of the plays at this stage was stereotyped ; their treatment of subjects was largely determined by religious associations. It was necessary to secularize the drama in order to advance beyond this stage.

The secularization of the drama came into being fundamentally because of the circumstances of production. Lacking other means of amusing themselves, the medieval folk naturally crowded into the Churches to see the religious shows. It was soon impossible to accommodate the people in the small space of the Churches. So the performances

had to be carried outside the Church walls. Thus, the drama migrated from the Church into the market-place. A new and stronger trend in the development of English drama was fostered by an injudicious acts of the Church authorities. Instructions were issued forbidding the clergy to act in the Churches; numerous complaints were voiced in the literary works of the time. The result of this prohibition was distinctly not that which was desired; it merely threw the drama into the hands of those people among whom it was to flourish luxuriantly. The townguilds took over the representation of the plays and carried on the tradition to the sixteenth century.

The miracle plays, or mysteries, which grew out of the early liturgical drama came to fruition in the fourteenth century. "The guilds, as a co-operative effort, prepared for certain Feast Days, notable for the festival of Corpus Christi, a series of biblical plays to be performed at various 'stations' in a town. Each play would be mounted on a platform fitted with wheels, and so could be drawn from one 'station' to another...............Here was drama as a genuinely social activity, a co-operative enterprise, maintained by guilds of craftsmen, employing their own members as amateurs." (*Ifor Evans*). In the Morality plays the characters were abstract vices and virtues. Apart from the Morality plays, there existed short plays named 'Interludes.' They were mainly pieces to be performed in the houses of the more intelligent Tudor gentry. They gave entertainment with some instruction, to Tudor gentlemen and ladies. Often the humour was extremely crude, the action clumsy, and the road back towards moralizing and allegory ever open.

The influence of foreign drama, and of foreign literature generally, is evident in these plays, at this period. Various attempts were being made to translate, to imitate works by the classic writers or by the new hands of humanists. The impression of humanism, on the other hand, was making itself felt on the primitive drama of the sixteenth century, and it is out of this humanistic movement that the first true tragedy and comedy sprang.

The revival of interest in classical drama is an im-

portant feature of this period. The Renaissance imposed a learned tradition upon a nascent national drama. The classical example gave dramatists a boldness and elevation of purpose, which the native drama had now here achieved.

"The classical drama gave examples both for comedy and tragedy, and as far as England is concerned, these models were, with negligible exceptions, Latin......The Latin models for comedy were Terence and Plautus and some of their influence can be seen in Nicholas Udall's "Ralph Roister Doister"......In tragedy .....The main model was Seneca, a philosopher of Nero's time, whose moral discourses were known in antiquity, and who was also the author of a series of 'closet' dramas." (*Ifar Evans*).

The long reign of Elizabeth, though sufficiently agitated to keep the mind alert, was comparatively stable and peaceful. The nobility, who had been nursed in domestic turbulence, for which there was now no place, took advantage of the diversity of employment, thrown open to them in every direction. They put forth, in the words of Shakespeare,

> "Some to the wars, to try their fortunes there;
> Some to discover islands far away;
> Some to the studious universities:"—

and the effect of these various pursuits was speedily discernible. A high sense of honour and generosity, and chivalrous valour, ran with electric speed from bosom to bosom on the return of the first adventures in the Flemish campaigns. The wonderful reports of discoveries, by the intrepid mariners, on the other hand, produced an inconceivable effect in diffusing a thirst for novelties among the people.

England, in fact, had been improving from the time of Henry VII; the middle class of society had, in almost every country, acquired wealth by trade and commerce. This brought numbers to the capital at particular seasons of the year for whom it was desirable to provide entertainment. Small theatres now rose in various parts of the city. Greene, Nash, Lyly, Peele, Marlowe, Kyd, Lodge, and

others, all wrote for them, and irritated and gratified the public curiosity by an endless succession of pieces, of which few perhaps were wholly destitute of merit.

It was soon after this period that Shakespeare reached London ; and his first employ, like that of the poets, his contemporaries, was the amending of the production of others. Jonson followed at no long interval of time, and had recourse to the same means of procuring a subsistence. Shakespeare happily formed a permanent connexion with one company, for whom he wrote and acted ; while Jonson was compelled to carry his talents from theatre to theatre, as they were required, and had perhaps as seldom the choice as the conduct of his subject.

It is not easy to ascertain with any precision how long Shakespeare had been in possession of the stage when Jonson commenced his dramatic career But it is somewhat singular that the literary characters who immediately preceded Jonson, should have made no improvement in the construction of their stories ; the plot of 'Tamburlaine' is not a whit more regular, or skilful than that of 'Gorboduc' or 'Locrine'. Beyond Seneca, these writers seldom appear to have looked : and from him they drew little but the tameness of his dialogue, and the inflation of his sentiments ; their serious scenes were still histories, and sometimes lives ; and their comic ones, though replete with grotesque humour, were without dependence, object, or end. To reform this seemed worthy of Jonson, and to this his earliest as well as his latest efforts were directed. However great might be the talents and genius now employed on the stage, he could not but feel that it was still necessary to introduce a more regular drama than had hitherto appeared. The superiority of the classics in this respect was forcibly impressed on his young and ardent mind ; and though his admiration of their productions might be occasionally carried too far, it led to beneficial results. With this object Jonson entered the dramatic field. He had no sooner acquired a little credit with the managers then he resolved to embody his own conceptions, and model his future pieces upon the plan of his classic masters. For this purpose, it was necessary that he should invent

his own plots. His 'Every Man in his Humour' exhibits no unfavourable specimen of his judgment, taste, and originality. It was, in fact, the first regular comedy in the English language.

It is necessary to regard Jonson in the light in which he evidently viewed himself, that of a moral satirist. If the comedies of the contemporaries of his early days effected any beneficial purpose; if they led to the exposure and detestation any evil quality, or the correction of any prevalent folly, it was by accident, not design; but with Jonson this was the primary object. We see this in the first play which he is known to have written.

With this aim in view Jonson came to the theatre, possessed of many advantages. We may collect from 'The Case is Altered', and 'Every Man in his Humour', that he was recent from the study of Plautus and Terence: Besides this, all the stores of ancient literature were open to him, and he was familiar not only with the perfect productions of the Greek dramatists, but with the fragments which lie scattered among the works of the sophists and grammarians, and which, in his days, were not to be found without much cost and labour. Jonson also entered with the same ardour into the productions of his own times, and acquired a very considerable degree of information on every topic connected with the arts then known and cultivated. Nature had besides given him a quick and almost intuitive faculty of discerning the ridiculous, a powerful and original vein of humour, and a genius, if not sublime, yet occasionally so raised by intense contemplation of the sublimest models as to bear no very distant resemblance of it.

In the plots of his comedies, which were constructed from his own materials, Jonson is deserving of undisputed praise. Without violence, without indeed, any visible effort, the various events of the story are so lined together that they have the appearance of accidental introduction; yet they all contribute to the main design, and support that just harmony which alone constitutes a perfect story.

With such extraordinary requisites for the stage, joined to a strain of poetry always manly, frequently lofty, and sometimes almost sublime, it may at first appear strange

that his dramas are not more in vogue; but a little attention to his peculiar mode and habits of thinking well perhaps enable us in some measure to account for it. Jonson was the painter of humours, not of passions. It was not his object to assume a leading passion, and so mix and qualify it with others incidental to the common nature, as to produce a being instantly recognised as one of the common sort.

In comedy Jonson's genius is found at its best; and his influence was considerable. The Restoration dramatists leaned strongly upon him. In fact, the Restoration dramatists had only Jonson in their minds, whenever they spoke about classical English playwrights. It is only to be regretted that from the eighteenth century the idolatory of Shakespeare has deprived Jonson of the place which should be his upon the English stage. A certain solidity, aggressiveness, and downright honesty of mind were Jonson's characteristics. It was chiefly these qualities of aggressive decision and rugged honesty which enabled him to hold for a quarter of a century his position of literary dictator, and lord of the tavern wits. The tavern was for the seventeenth century what the coffee-house was for the eighteenth, a rallying place for literary men; and Jonson is almost as typical a tavern figure as Falstaff. His "mountain belly and his rocky face", his genial, domineering personality, ruled by royal right the bohemian circle which gathered at "The Mermaid" or "The Devil", where the young fellows of the "tribe of Ben" heard words—

> "So nimble and so full of subtle flame
> As if that every one from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest.
> Of his dull life."

(From Verses entitled "*Master Francis Beaumont to Ben Jonson.*"

CLASSICISM OF BEN JONSON

Jonson came to the front as a dramatist at a time when one set of tendencies in the Renaissance, namely those in the direction of imitation of the classics, were asserting themselves strongly against the practice of unlimited in-

dividualism and freedom in art which we call romantic. Sidney had already shown his scorn of plays on the native English model, and he was followed by a group of poets and critics who attacked all forms of romantic literature in satires and episiles, written intimation of the Latin poets. By the beginning of the century, this reaction had gone so far that, as we have seen, Shakespeare was probably influenced by it to desert chronicle history and romantic comedy for tragedy and satire. Jonson showed this movement in the drama. He took up the line of development which had been begun in 'Gorbuduc', 'Ralph Roister Doister', and other plays written under the influence of Seneca and Plautus. The classical reaction was short-lived, and the romantic temper reasserted itself as we see in the later plays of Shakespeare but Jonson refused to bend. He fought all his life-long, a battle against what he judged to be the ignorant preference of the public for the romantic form. Not only did he stand out for the classical "unities" but he made war upon the fantastic and extravagant qualities of romantic imagination, and laboured to supplant them by classical sanity and restraint.

It is interesting to note that the dramatists who preceded Jonson failed to supply contemporary dramatic literature with proper plot constructions. Beyond Seneca, these writers seldom appeared to look; from him they drew their tameness of dialogue, and the inflation of sentiments; their serious scenes were still histories, and sometimes live: and their comic ones, though replete with grotesque humour were without dependence, object, or end. It remained for Jonson to reform this aspect of Elizabethan drama. The superiority of the ancients in this respect was forcibly impressed on Jonson's young and ardent mind. While the Elizabethan poets had hitherto, generally drawn their plots from some romance or novel, Jonson invented his own plots.

Another aspect of Jonson's classical temperament was his zeal for moral justice. He viewed himself as a moral satirist. If the comedies of the contemporaries of his early days effected any beneficial purpose; if they led to the exposure and detestation of any evil quality, or the correc-

tion of any prevalent folly, it was by accident, not design; but with Jonson this was the primary object. We see it in the first play which he is known to have written.

With this aim in view, Jonson came to the theatre possessed of many advantages. We may collect from 'The Case is Altered', and 'Every Man in his Humour', that he was recent from the study of Plautus and Terence. Moreover, all the stores of ancient literature were open to him, and he was familiar not only with the perfect productions of the Greek dramatists, but with the fragments even that lie scattered among the works of these grammarians. Nature was also favourable to Jonson; she gave him a quick and almost intuitive faculty of discerning the ridiculous, a powerful and origmal vein of humour, and a genius, if not sublime, yet occasionally so raised by intense contemplation of the sublimest models, as to bear no very distant resemblance of it. All these helped Jonson in his classical vein of composition.

"What Jonson intended was to recall comedy from its romantic entanglement and to restore it to its ancient province. In 1598, he was a playwright seeking success on the public stage, and trained in its conventions and practices. Neither at that time nor at any other did he plan plays that should break from the popular theaters and become academic or closet affairs. His purpose was to alter his own practices, and to reform the stage; and he represented the critical tendencies aleady existing; first, a reaction from the absurdities of current forms, secondly, a recourse to classical standards as a cure for lawlessness; and, lastly, the establishment of a realistic and satirical comedy on a rational plan. The first two positions were those of Sidney's 'Apologie', which must have potently influenced Jonson; the third was being promoted by contemporary dramatists, especially by the comedies of his friend Chapman......"(*A. H. Thorndike*).

Jonson's classicism, however, has its defects too. What most discourages the reader of Jonson is the absence of charm. We move away with Jonson from the world of flesh and blood and permeating spirit that Shakespeare created towards an exhibition of

automatons splendidly constructed to perfrom their maker's biddings ; the high romantic temper of the Shakespearean comedy gives way to the artificial treatment of whims, freaks, and humours ; the realism of Shakespearean tragedy and its universality are displaced in Jonson by learned frigidity. While reading Jonson, we rarely forget that it is only play and dialogue. True to his classical programme, Jonson ridiculed the abuses and fashionable follies of the time by making the persons of his dramas represent the peculiar hobbies or "humours" of men, but in doing this, his drama lost in faithfulness to life through a method which inclined him to make the mere caricature of what we call a "fad" take the place of a character. Jonson's tragedies, 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline' are massive, scholarly, and painstaking, but they lack the warmth and humanity which distinguish Shakespeare's treatment of classical themes, and one is apt to read them with respect and with profit rather than with delight.

Jonson, as we have noticed, set himself boldly to cure the theatrical evils of the time by establishing a comic and a tragic form based on classic example. In the latter endeavour, he had no success ; in the former he succeeded in making himself the greatest of his age.

This classicism of Jonson is best reflected in his 'Every Man in his Humour. Jonson here tries to harmonize a medieval medical conceit with the methods employed in the Latin theatre. For the Middle Ages the 'humours' or natural moistures of the brain governed a man's nature ; too much of one, or a shifting of the due proportions governing normality, would produce eccentricity of one sort or another. Thus, melancholy, greed, timorousness, choler, all were 'humours' and the persons who exhibited any of these, was described as 'humorous'. It is quite obvious that if art is to make use of these humours, the artist must deal with a type, not with a personality. This was what Terence did in his dramas. His testy old fathers are all the same, his cunning slaves have all the same features ; he picks up salient features of a class of men and pictures them in his characters. Jonson, being a classicist, determined to follow this method. Besides this, Jonson also

decided to follow into practice another old classical dictum. The object of the classical comic dramatists was to ridicule the vices of man, put folly in a foolish shape before the spectators, and so laugh the audience into good behaviour. Jonson too determined that his comedy should be a satiric comedy ; and for that purpose the humours gave him the very tool he required.

It is necessary in this connection, to say a few words on the celebrated classical comic dramatists, Plautus and Terence. Plautus was born about B. C. 254 in Rome. His comedies which are 20 in number, enjoyed unrivalled popularity among the Romans, and continued to be represented down to the time of Diocletion. The pungent and sometimes coarse wit, the rapidity of the action, and the shrewd knowledge of human nature displayed have ensured their continued popularity. Terence was born at Carthage in B. C. 195. First devoting himself to translating Greek drama into the Latin tongue, he had his first comedy, 'Andria,' produced in B. C. 166. Six comedies are all that remain to us ; and they are probably all that Terence produced. A man of great refinement and artistic skill, gifted with a singular felicity and purity of diction and a delicate humour very different from the broader comic power of Plautus, Terence is an outstanding figure in Roman literature and in the history of the drama. In summing up his merits, we ought not to omit the praise which has been universally accorded to him – that although a foreigner and a freed man, he divides with Cicero and Caesar the palm of pure Latinity.

HUMOUR COMEDY

"The main tradition of English comedy embodied in Shakespeare aims at producing an atmosphere of happiness and harmony. We are so accustomed to this that we are apt to forget how different is the comedy of most other great literatures. The best example of the other type is the comedy of Moliere. In his plays, the persons are made caricatures of some vice or folly and the circumstances of the plot exaggerate and so exhibit the absurdity of the vice. An obvious example is "L' Avare." Bergson's book d.n. "Laughter" explains the philosophy of this view

of comedy. The sense of the ludicrous, he believes, is developed only at a comparatively late stage of social evolution, and Bergson holds that laughter is a social gesture developed to correct tendencies dangerous to the progress of the race." (Janet Spens). In order to prove this definition of the origin of laughter, Janet Spens then quotes two examples from Bergson's book, and comments: "It does seem that the cause of the laughter in both cases was the automatism of human being." Proceeding, she says, "Now, this definition fits admirably into Jonson's practice in Comedy. In 'Every Man in his Humour' he gives us a number of persons each with his own trick of thought and speech, which has become more or less completely the whole man. The 'plotting' consists in providing an adequate reason for bringing all these persons together on such an account as will exhibit them best and allow them as it were to come to the ground with a crash."

A peculiarity of Jonson's art is hinted by the title 'Every Man in his Humour'. The word 'humour' was a cant term in his day, equivalent to 'whim' or 'foible.' He hit upon the device of endowing each one of his characters with some particular whim or affectation, some ludicrous exaggeration of manner, speech, or dress; and of so thrusting forward this single old feature that all others might be lost sight of. Every man, in other words, should be in 'his humour'. This working principle Jonson applied afterward in his two great comedies, 'Volpone' and 'The Alchemist.' In 'Volpone,' he studied, not a foible or whim, but a master passion, the passion of greed, as it affects a whole social group; in 'The Alchemist', he made an elaborate study of human gullibility. Unfortunately, however, there is something mechanical in this method of going to work according to a rigid programme. We may note the case of Shakespeare's dealing with passions, in this connection. In 'Othello', he dealt with jealousy, in 'Macbeth' with the passion of ambition. But he does this in a very different way from Jonson: as a matter of fact, Shakespeare introduces much more variety, surprise, and free play of life. But Jonson holds up one character after another, as a logician presents the various parts of his argument. He

shame through the efforts of a censor representing the author's attitude.

After this Jonson deserted comedy for a time. Jonson's return to comedy after 'Sejanus' was made in 1604, when in collaboration with Chapman and Marston, he wrote 'Eastward Hoe'. The four comedies which followed, rank with 'Every Man in his Humour' as his masterpieces. They are all comedies of humours ; but each is a peculiar development of the type. In 'Volpone', the Plautian model appears only in the use of the clever servant as the mainspring of the action, and of entanglements based on the trickstertricked type of plot. The play has little mirth ; but it is a vigorous exposure of greed and inequity. Its purpose is not amusement but satire, its subject not folly but vice, Its protagonist not the managing servant but his master, a monster of villainy.

'The Silent Woman' is much less intent on moral castigation than is 'Volpone', and, also, much merrier. Its plot is farcical, dealing with the entrapping of Morose, who hates, niose into marriage with Epicoene, who turns out to be a noisy Tartar, and, after Morose has forgiven his nephew, proves to be a boy ; Sir Dauphine, the nephew, and his friends, are the wits. There is abundant satire of the manners and affectations of the day.

In the 'Alchemist', Jonson essays another large canvas of tricksters and gulls. The achievements Subtle. Dol Common and Face, a housekeeper, have set up their snares in the house of Face's master. One after another, the different characters expose their folly and greed, and add to the fun and entanglement, until the master of the house returns and joins withitiace to keep the spoils, including the widow, and artisjck the doors on dupers and duped. Perhaps, in notifther play has Jonson so completely succeeded in accomplishing what he intended as he has in this. The entire play is in blank verse. The language is varied, idiomatic and precise ; the style, finished and animated.

In the presentation of manners and character, 'Bartholomew Fair' may, indeed, be held to outrank even 'The

Alchemist'. In many respects, however its inferiority is palpable. It is unwieldy in structure ; its humour is often gross and farcical; and it is overcrowded with persons and incidents. But the characters and incidents are freer from imitation of Plautus and Aristophanes than are those of any other of his comedies. Original in its scheme and subject, daring in its invention, 'Bartholomew Fair' marks the highest development of the comedy of humours as a national type.

'The Divell is an Asse' betrays a flagging invention. The machinery of the devil is not quite presentable. But this was only to be expected after the prodigal expenditure of the four preceding comedies. The remaining comedies of Jonson come near to deserving Dryden's harsh criticism: 'mere dotages,

The great excellence of Jonson's comedies is their delineation of character. This is, however, conditioned more by classical models and rules, as in the observance of the unities or his fidelity to historical authorities, or his copying of the Plautian types. It is also conditioned by his method of making each person the illustration of one trait or humour, and by his disposition to substitute description for drama, and satire for fact, and to exaggerate his satire into farce. Akin to this defect are Jonson's over-use of the long monologue after the fashion of classical models, the heaviness and coarseness which his realism often gives to his vocabulary and his thoroughness, which refuse to let go person, speech, or situation until it is absolutely exhausted. Yet, nevertheless, Jonsons' comic portraiture remains among the greatest achievements of the English drama, because of its clearness and certaneth, its richness of humour and dramatic varacity.

JONSONS REALISM

In the seventeenth century, we find the realistic comedy always opposing the artificiality of the romantic tragicomedy and of the pastoral drama. It should be noted that in the late sixteenth century, the realistic farce, deriving its tone from the earlier interludes, had preserved an independent existence alongside of the romantic comedy

in fact, always, or nearly always, let us see the machinery in Jonson's own words,

> "When some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits and his powers
> In their conflictions, all to run one way
> This may be truly said to be a humour."

"Humour he (Jonson) conceived to be something dependent upon the physical constitution of the individual which provokes a habit, constitutes a ruling foible, and diverts the action of its subject into courses which move mirth... His comedies form an inexhaustible Hogarthian picture gallery of sixteenth century oddities. But he was too profound a student of human nature to stop here. He knew the point at which eccentricity shades off into vice, and discerned the subtle links whereby crime is connected with moral weakness. Therefore, in the noblest of his pla s, dominant passions tower above the undergrowth of humours. Lust, hunger for gold, jealousy, brutal egotism, vulgar ambition, control and sway the multiform kaleidoscope of minor aberrations brought before our notice in bewildering profusion..................This robust power of characterisation and of maintaining the gradations of dramatic interest is Jonson's highest quality. But it has a corresponding defect............. Though we retire from his theatre, overwhelmed by the man's prodigious inventive and delineative force, we feel that we have been after all, at a marionette show, where the puppets are moved by wires." (*John Addington Symonds*).

An important aspect of humorous drama is the matter of comic repetition and variation. By comic repetition we mean such artistic processes as resemble those in music, a theme or 'motif' repeated with variations—so in comedy is repeated and varied a 'motif' a situation or device. Mere repetition of an effect suggests that mechanical 'raideur' (rigidity) and automatic respensiveness—as of the pupped of jack-in-the-box which is of the essence of comedy In Moliere and Jonson, this technique is employed perfectly. In Shakespeare's comedies there is not what there is in Moliere's or Jonson's the all-pervading critical 'comic

spirit' and a plot wholly to fit and suit. Such an effect is not out of keeping with Jonson's aesthetic purposes. Presenting in the chief role not a rounded character but an angular and purely comical one, a character pretty much the embodiment of a single trait, he found such a technique fit to his hand for portraying that very quality of a man's nature when, according to Bergson, it is essentially comic—out of harmony with circumstances or society, stiff and mechanical like the jack-in-the-box.

Of such comic repetition and variation, the best examples in Jonson are to be found in his 'Volpone', where Mosca, apparently absorbed and abstracted in his cares, makes up, item by item with malicious delight, the inventory of his supposedly defunct master's valuables, while in swoop the legacy-hunters, one after the other, each in turn gloating over the precious items, as mentioned, in the thought that they are already, not the others', but his own.

It is with Plautus, that such abstract characterization and repetition of 'motif' began, particularly in his miser and his braggart soldier. Euclio is the model, not only for all later misers, but also for Jonson's jealous Kitely and other characters. The method is also employed in play like the 'Menaechmi', source of the 'Comedy of Errors'.

Let us now discuss Jonsons comedies. Of the early representative plays of Jonson, 'Every Man in his Humour' was the masterpiece. The plot, Jonson's own invention, deals with tricks played upon the elder Knowell and the jealous Kitely, involving the exposure of various humours and ending happily with the marriage of young Knowell and Kitely's sister.

The comedy of humours was carried on in 'Every Man out of his Humour.' A vain glorious knight, a public jester, an affected courtier, a doting husband and others exhibit their humours and are finally forced out of their affections through the agency of Macilente, who also, is cured of his besetting envy.

'Cynthia's Revels' resembles 'Every Man out of his Humour' in its general plant of a group of would-be gallants and ladies whose follies are exposed to ridicule and

ence between the romantic spirit and the classic is that the former tends towards escape from the actual conditions of life, while the latter tends to work realistically within them. This appears evident when we compare 'Twelfth Night' or 'The Tempest' with 'Every Man in his Humour.' The former are full or glancing imagination and irresponsible fancy; the latter moves in the hard light of everyday London. This realism, the vivid picture of London life, makes Jonson's comedies among the most interesting plays of the period, From Jonson's comedies alone, as it has been very remarkably said, it would be possible to reconstruct whole areas of Elizabethan society; a study of them is indispensable if one would know the brilliant and amusing surface of the most sociable era of English History. At least one of Jonson's comedies, too, gives this close and realistic study of manners with a gaiety and grace fairly rivalling Shakespeare; 'The Silent Woman' is one of the most sparkling comedies ever written full of splendid fun, and with a bright, movement which never flags.

In conclusion, let us quote from R. S. Knox's essay on Jonson: "A realistic comedy of manners, in which the emphasis is on character rather than on incident, and the attitude is that of the satirist—such was the play-type which Jonson first introduced to the English stage and of which he remains still the unrivalled master. All the elements in this new comedy, the mirroring of everyday life and of contemporary characters and the satire—may, indeed, be found sporadically in previous drama, as early as the moral interludes and as recent as the first comedies of Shakespeare but never before had they deliberately been sought and brought together as the essential matter of comedy......No other series of comedies afford such a rich and shrewd commentary on the town life of the time, for, wherever he may place the scene, Jonson's eye is ever on London. He has ranged over the whole of its society from courtier to water-carrier and has set vividly before us a motley company of its types. He has faithfully mirrored the veriety of its fashions and ruthlessly anatomized its reigning follies. It would be hard to find elsewhere in English drama such a teeming gallery of satiric pictures

of the vanities and shams to which men are liable, and, while this satire may be levelled at the absurdities of his own day, much of it has lasting point. We still have with us our Bobadills and Matthews, our quacks and quackeries and at these Jonson can yet help us to take a knowing laugh."

JONSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH DRAMA

When we review Ben Jonson's position among the poets of his age, the first thing which strikes us is the length of his career as a man of letters. He conquered fame in 1598, while Queen Elizabeth was yet alive, and Shakespeare had but recently begun to reap his laurels. He lived through the reign of James I, contributing more than any other poet to form the literary tone of that king's period. He was still a power in the wor'd of learning and fine letters in the year when John Hampden refused to pay King Charles's ship-money.

From his contemporaries J nson stood forth with singular distinctness. Jonson manifested his individuality in so many ways that it is easy to form a tolerably accurate conception of the man. Unlike the most illustrious of his brother playwrights, he was one of the ripest scholars of an age which produced great students; he is said to divide with Milton the honour of being the most learned among English poets. He formed a high uncompromising ideal of the poet's vocation, felt himself bound to assert its dignity in his works, and from the first attempted to strike out a way of art different from that of his contemporaries.

Jonson appeared at a time when the University. Wits and Shakespeare, their hated follower, were establishing upon the stage the romantic comedy and the flamboyant tragedy. To Ben Jonson, belongs the credit of recalling comedy from these romantic entanglements and of restoring it to its ancient province. Jonson's main purpose was to alter his own practices, and to reform the stage; and he represented the critical tendencies already existing: first a reaction from the absurdities of current forms; secondly, a recourse to classical standards as a cure for lawlessness; and, lastly, the establishment of a realistic and satirical

patronized by Greene and Lyly. This earlier form of realistic play, often with close reminiscences of the Latin plays, was employed by many dramatists in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, and was carried forward by them, until Jonson came to set his seal upon the type and gave it a strength and a purpose which previously it had only too often lacked.

Shakespeare deserves attention among these earlier dramatists, since in his 'The Taming of the Shrew' and in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' he produced two of the most capable and interesting works of the realistic type of comedy, written in the last years of the century.

To Ben Jonson, belongs the credit of infusing into this form of drama a richer and a deeper note. True to his realistic ideal, Jonson represents the life of his time, but especially the low life of Elizabethan London, with a hard, dry literalism. Jonson's power of observation was very keen and minute, his familiarity with contemporary London very great, and his 'humours', or individualisation of certain traits, are based upon London society and life. "No more genuine sketches of London character are to be found in the drama. They are drawn, not from books but from observation, and as an observer, Jonson had no equal among his contemporaries." (Introduction to Mermaid Series of Ben Jonson. Vol. I, lxix.) In his 'Every Man in his Humour', Jonson gives us a wonderful picture of the customs and habits of the London of his time. From his window in Fleet Street, or standing in St. Paul's he closely observes the motley crowd of common folk, and draws a true picture of the various types.

It was only to be expected from Ben Jonson that his observations should turn to the uglier side of human nature than to the better. Depravity, failing, moral shortcoming attract his attention; he analyses them minutely, and draws a striking picture of them. He had been compared, in this respect to the Flemish painters. Mezieres points out his resemblance in this respect to Balzac. Perversity, character, of disposition, and exceptional faults attract both these authors.

One of the follies and vices which Jonson criticized and against which he levelled the sharpest arrows of his satire, is avarice. Jacques, in "The Case is Altered" writ en in 1598, reminds us of Harpagon in Moliere's "L'Avare", although the influence of Plautus is easily recognisable.

Commenting on Jonson's 'Every Man out of his Humour', Emile Legouis says: "This play and its predecessor reproduce so much that belongs to the manners of their time, that London and London life in 1600 might be partly reconstituted with their aid." In his 'Bartholomew Fair' too, we see this same realistic vein. It is rich in details taken from life and glimpses of actual manners, for which he certainly made copious notes on the spot.

According to Arthur Compton-Rickett, "Whether he (Jonson) is dealing with clear-cut characters or clear-cut repartee, he is equally happy. He has an eye for external peculiarities, unequalled by any of our men of letters save Smollett and Dickens......Note the touches with which he builds up Volpone's character:

"I gain
No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
Wound no Earth with ploughshares, fat no beasts
To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
Oil, corn, or men to grind them into powder."

There is something of Dickens' enjoyment in the comic invention with which he overlays his figures. One recalls Zeal-of the-Land-Busy in 'Bartholomew Fair,' who pretended to be so greatly shocked by the gaieties, yet is discovered 'fast by the teeth in the cold turmey pie......with a great white loaf on his left hand and a glass of Malmsey on his right'......There is no more elaborate painter of London life than Jonson. Shakespeare paints with a bigger brush, but for detailed effects Jonson is supreme. He satirises vice with the vigour of Moliere, but not with his adroitness. Had he lashed less furiously he might have kept a better edge on his rapier." (*A History of English Literature*).

As far as realism was concerned, the classical quality of Jonson's comedies gave them an interest that is permanent, and an influence that was far-reaching. One differ,

upon vivid movement in the players for effect, and on keen imaginative sympathies in the audience for approval, assisted them to such a point that the magnificent artistic licences of 'Pericles' and 'A Winter's Tale' were rendered possible Against all this Jonson, the Westminster scholar, the bluff rebellious personage who had killed his two men in single combat, and who felt pugnaciously inclined to challenge all the world, rebelled. He declared himself for unity of action, unity of time, unity of place and unity of subject. He produced a masterpiece which preserved these decencies of art, and which borrowed something from the Latin classics. At the same time, he took pains to prove that the follies of the town might be acutely seized and vividly presented in accordance with the stricter rules of drama, and that comedy might be made to serve a moral purpose by delineating foibles common to humanity." (*John Addington Symonds*). This, in short, can be regarded as the original contribution of Ben Jonson to English drama.

JONSON'S TRAGEDY

Jonson's tragedies, of which two only have come down to us, do not call for much additional remark. Both are taken from the Roman story, and he has apparently succeeded in his principal object, which was to show the characters of the drama to the spectators of his days precisely as they appeared to those of their own. The plan was scholastic, but it was not judicious. The ideas, the language, the allusions could only be readily caught by the contemporaries of Augustus and Tiberius ; and this redounds not a little to the author's praise, and the credit mainly goes to his vast knowledge of classical literature.

In fact, Jonson shows in his tragedies his learning, vast knowledge and above all his great conscientiousness and minuteness in the accumulation of details and references and quotations. The characters lack life or are overdrawn. His two tragedies are "Sejanus", and "Catiline", both dealing with antiquity : Jonson could hardly resist the temptation of imitating the ancients. Many passages are simply translations from Latin classics. We feel that his

vast erudition is encumbering to his genius, and is detrimental to spontaneity. According to Mezieres, "Ben Jonson forgets, that general considerations, and speeches which are well in place in a historical treatise, are entirely misplaced in a tragedy. He omits no information with which historians and poets of antiquity have furnished him ; by the abundance of exact details he fancies that he faithfully reproduces the physiognomy of a period, but he overlooks the fact that under these details, he entirely crushes the dramatic action and fails to interest his audience." We feel, as we read his tragedies, that he forgets that his plays will be witnessed by a British audience of the sixteenth century, and he writes as if he were addressing a Roman audience of the second or third century A. D. As a result of this, his allusions are absolutely incomprehensible to the ordinary play-goer of the sixteenth century

Besides this, Jonson wrote his tragedies in the classic style, with long discussions and long dissertations, closely observing the three unities. This is the reason, why the tragedies failed to interest the public, whose tastes decidedly inclined towards the romantic play, with its variety, emotion, and change of scenery.

The passion and pathos, the tragic conflict, and the appeals to human sentiment which alone can touch and stir the common audience, are lacking in Ben Jonson's tragedies. He is too learned, he is powerful in conception and delineation, but he is too minute and lacks the talent of freeing himself from the lumber of many details which encumber his path.

"Catiline" appeared in 1611 and although Jonson seems to have made some concessions to the popular taste, he stamped upon it his classicism in a perhaps still more marked manner. However in spite of long-winded orations, tedious monologues, and dry choruses, it has more sustained interest than 'Sejanus' ; and its characterisation is masterly. The whole play is stretched out with robust and Roman touches ; and the colouring is somebre, in harmony with grim subject.

The reason why Jonson's tragedies were powerless to

comedy on a rational plain. What Jonson did was to develop these tendencies and give them a concrete form. Thus, he became a leader in a movement which gave to realistic and satirical comedy a new importance ; of the early representative plays of this class, 'Every Man in his Humour' was a masterpiece. Jonson's combativeness, the independence of his criticism, and his deliberate design to bring innovation into Elizabethan Drama, are manifest in the famous prologue to this play :

"You will be pleased to see
One such to-day, as other plays should be ;
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas ;
Nor creaking throne comes down, the boys to please ;
Nor nimble squib is seen to make afear'd
The Gentlewomen ; nor rolled bullet heard
To say, it thunders ; nor tempestuous drum
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come ;
But deeds, and language, such as men do use ;
And persons, such as comedy would choose,
When she would show an image of the times,
And Sport with human follies not with crimes."

This was an original contribution by Jonson to English Drama. In an age when people stirred for romantic emotions and ideas, and demanded a heightened portrayal of these sentiments in the drama, it was a rare courage in "rare Ben Jonson" to stand up for Classicism, for the ancient ; and, while eager for the good opinion of the judicious, to scorn the approbation of the public.

We are next led to the question of Humours. The Humour, in Jonson's plays, is a simplified and somewhat distorted individual with a typical mania. According to Jonson, humour was something which was dependent upon the physical constitution of the individual, which provokes a habit, constitutes a ruling foible, and diverts the action of its subject into courses which move mirth. In seizing these ruling follies by observations of the motley London crown, he was eminently happy. His comedies form an inexhaustible Hogarthian picture-gallery of sixteenth century oddities. In fact, dominant passions tower above

that undegrowth of humours. Lust, hunger for gold, jealousy, brutal egotism, vulgar ambition, control and sway the multiform kaleidoscope of minor aberrations brought before our notice in bewildering profusion. As in a base-relief, the larger persons of Jonson's art stand prominently forward, the lesser retreat into the background ; but all alike are firmly outlined, unmistakable in individuality. This robust power of characterisation and of maintaining the gradations of dramatic imterest is Jonson's highest quality.

Jonson's satiric bent of mind also contributed much to the development of realistic comedy in England. He felt called upon to lash the errors and the vices of his age ; and he boasted that he took Horace for his model. Yet he had neither the irony nor the urbanity of Augustan poet. His blows fell as hard upon the backs of people he chastised, as his translations from smooth Latin verse fall harsh upon our modern ears. His comedies roused society against him. Whole classes, like the courtiers, the playgoers, the actors, bad poets, and fashionable fribblers, felt themselves attacked. The follies of a tyrannous father, of a jealous husband, all are put before us ; the ruling eccentricities of the age are mocked out of court.

Jonson's next venture in tragedy, 'Sejanus', produced in 1603, proved that his conception of tragedy differed no less from the romantic ideal than his conception of comedy. It is a laboured, carefully sententious transcript from classical authorities, so composed as to deserve a semblance of unity in time and place and action, and furnished with choruses after the manner of Seneca.

Jonson's typifies the defiance to romantic playwrights. " Romance, adapted to the stage by Marlowe's predecessors, by Marlowe himself, and by Shakespeare, now in the morning of his glory, neglected classical rules of art. To time and space, the romantic muse had proved herself indifferent...............Romantic poets calmly ignored the unities of Aristotelian tradition. For them, a story translated into action was the main point ; and the conditions of the English theatres, devoid of scenery, dependent

But Jonson's arrogance is often rather cumbrous. The approval which Jonson codstantly claims from his audience and his ill-will to everyone and everything and faith in himself and his own supersority, are moreover irritating. His preoccupation with himself in contrast to the modesty with which Shakespeare invariably sinks his personality in his work, is never to be found or seen elsewhere.

Unlike Shakespeare also, Jonson deals with human life in sections rather then as a whole: being content to satirise manners rather than to paint men and women. In this drama, he is a moralist first and foremost, afterwards the artist. Mr. T. S. Eliot has wonderfully brought out this difference between Jonson and Shakespeare in a few words: "Whereas in Shakespeare, the effect is due to the way in which the characters act upon one another, in Jonson it is given by the way in which the characters fit in with each other."

A further difference may be observed in Jonsons treatment of London life. In fact, there is no more elaborate painter of London life than Jonson. Shakespeare paints with a bigger brush, cut for detialed effects Jonson is supreme.

Jonson's purpose is quite different from Shakespeare's in his Roman plays. Ae sets himself a historical and political problem to solve, and it is essential to his purpose that the Romans should have felt and thought as he represents them. To Shakespeare, this was unimportant; he was representing human beings independent of race or period. For this reason, the domestic side of his persons is always clearly indicated, while Jonson's Romans live entirely for their public careers.

We may next consider Jonson's satirical bent of mind. There could be no more illuminating contrast than this between Shakespeare and Jonson, in this connection. Whether in tragedy or in comedy, as we know, Shakespeare's presentation of existence was essentially romantic, and remote from the atmosphere of contemporary life. Even when he uses features of that life, he universalizes them, and invests them with a glamour not their own. It is a different

abstraction from life, and one far more closely conditioned by actual fact that we meet in Jonson's most characteristic comedies. In his great tragedies, Jonson is first and foremost a classic, both in strictness of his structure, and in the keen fidelity with which he paints the colour of a bygone age. The lordly licence allowed, and even pursued by the great Romantic Shakespeare in both these regards, has no appeal for Jonson. Similarly, when Shakespeare's mind passes into gloom and bitterness, the resulting satire is directed at the universal qualities of men. Jonson, however, is seldom a universal satirist; he is generally either a public satirist, lashing or mocking the fraud or the affected 'humours' of his day, or a private satirist, assailing his personal enemies with eager scorn and obloquy. The sense of humour which was so gay in Shakespeare, is hopelessly lacking in Jonson Shakespeare is the greatest of all humorists, and Jonson has not much claim to be one, for his temper was unsympathetic and his intellect, though strong, was a little coarse.

"The distinction between the plays of Shakespeare and the plays of Jonson is clearly to be seen when we glance at the development of the dramatic productivity of each. Humour (of Shakespeare), as it advances, tends to become more mellow, moving either towards increased kindliness or towards excessive meditation of a highly contemplative kind; satire (of Jonson), on the other hand, tends to grow more bitter and more severe. Humour may end in melancholy; satire nearly always ends in pessimism. Whereas in Shakespeare's work we see a continued kindliness and, at the close of his life, a melancholy contemplation of the shadows and of the shows of life, in Jonson we find a regular progression from the comparatively genial atmosphere of 'Every Man in his Humour' to the bitterness and the unconcealed contempt of 'Volpone'." (*Allardyce Nicoll*).

A SHORT ESTIMATE OF BEN JONSON

"If I were bound to offer in one sentence a definition of Ben Jonson's genius, I should be inclined to call him a poet of the understanding and of judgment, in whom vast erudition was combined with rarely acute faculties for

please the British public is that ever since the sixteenth century the success of the Drama in England had depended, and still depends, upon the opinion of the British public and not on that of the critic. And the public went, and stil goes to the theatre, not to have a literary feast which their palates cannot appreciate, but to have strong emotions and sensations which they can enjoy. For immediate success the playwright must, therefore, speak to the heart; to obtain permanent success, he must speak to the imagination, to the heart, and to the intellect. Shakespeare spoke to all three, Ben Jonson only spoke to the mind.

Swinburne had excellently remarked, and it is peculiarly true of 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline', that Ben Jonson "took so much interest in the creations that he had none left for the creatures of his intellect or art". The personages are drawn with extreme elaboration, and everything which is recorded of them by Sallust or Tacitus, even to their most trifling utterances, is woven into the dialogue; but the dramatist never lets himself go, and never breathes the breath of life into the Frankenstein monsters of his learned fancy. At the same time, the art of Jonson is very purely displayed in these stiff tragedies The verse marches with a certain heavy grandeur; the language is as stately as the sentiments and imagery are magnificent. A studied prosiness, doubtless affected to protest against the purple patchiness of the school of Marlowe, affects the entire composition, and makes the continuous reading of these Roman plays, a tedious exercise. In fact, there is little of Shakespeare's inspired vision in Jonson's tragedies.

The two tragedies of Jonson, in spite of their excellences, must be regarded as representing another failure to turn popular English tragedy back into the classical mould.

SHAKESPEARE AND JONSON

It has been the practice of Jonson's biographers to institute a comparison between him and Shakespeare. These parallels have not been in all cases much favourable to Jonson. Naturally, Shakespeare is best set off by throwing every object brought near him into shade. Shakespeare wants no light but his own. As he never has been

equalled, and in all human probability never will be equalled, it seems an invidious employ, at best to speculate, minutely on precise degree in which others fell short of him.

The differences between Jonson and Shakespeare are obvious and fundamental. Jonson's work as a whole is barer, more prosaic, more learned, and more laboured than Shakespeare's. Shakespeare, while he remains true to life yet contrives to invest his mimic world with a magical atmosphere of beauty and romance. But Jonson is a realist. He presents the life of his time, but especially the low life of Elzabethan London, with a hard, dry literalism. His object in his comedies was didactic. He thought that the poet's mission was to point a moral and to reform society. He ridiculed the abuses and fashionable follies of the time by making the persons of his dramas represent the peculiar hobbies or "humours" of men. But as a result of this, Jonson's plays lost in faithfulness to life through a method which inclined him to make the mere caricature of what we call a "fad" take the place of a character. The method of Jonson, great as he was, was thus a distinct falling off from that of Shakespeare. Jonson's tragedies, 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline', are massive, scholarly, and painstaking, but they lack the warmth and humanity which distinguish Shakespeare's treatment of classical themes, and one is apt to read them with respect and with profit rather than with delight.

It was Jonson, who in his own time and even afterwards provided the typical antithesis to Shakespeare. He was more original than Shakespeare. Shakespeare accepts the conditions of the stage of his time, is aware of its shortcomings, but resigns himself to them with a smile. His relations with his public remains of a sympathetic nature. Jonson, however, adopts a different attitude. He is an angry and arrogant opponent to the Elizabethan stage, and he sets up his own tastes, ideas, and theories, all derived from the ancients, against the popular taste. While Shakespeare follows with docility the course of the stream, Jonson flings his vast bulk against it.

studying and reproducing the distinctive marks of personal character, and who had overlaid a lively imaginative faculty with deliberately conceived ideals of the literary art. Fire of the imagination and fancy smouldered in the man without emerging into luminosity. He struggled under the weight of his encumbered memory; and haughtily submitted to the fetters of a self-prescribed rule. Yet it was this central heat of a naturally poetic temperament which gave warmth and glow to his best work, even when we recognise it to be clumsy, and feel bound to acknowledge that it bears the aspect rather of constructive ability than of general inspiration." (*John Addington Symonds*)

As for Jonson's influence, it was commanding in his own day, and has continued down to the present. His comedies were imitated as soon as they appeared. We can take for instance, 'Every Woman in her Humour' (1909). Beaumont and Fletcher studied in his school; Beaumont's 'The Woman-Hater' testifies to this. Marston, Middleton and Chapman were all influenced by Jonson. Of later dramatists, Field, Randolph, Cartwright, Nabbes and May employed Jonson's methods and wrote plays in his manner. All realistic comedy owned the influence of Jonson's comedy of humours, and reminiscences of its most effective scenes and types of character found their way into every kind of drama.

After the Restoration, Jonson's reputation increased. Dryden's praise was echoed by Dennis and others, who were eager to see neo-classical rules and models prevail in the theatres. The Restoration dramatists turned back towards Jonson's tragedies and comedies, regarding them as classical plays.

Jonson's influence, moreover, has been felt in the novel as well as the drama. His plays have been constantly read and have always encouraged a study of the absurdities of character and the incongruities of manners. Fielding and Smollett were conscious of their incentive, and Dickens, who knew them well and himself acted Bobadill, must, to no inconsiderable extent, have been indebted to their suggestion. In fact 'Bartholomew Fair' must have

been one of Dickens' sources of inspiration. Littlewit and his wife suggest the Kenwigges, while Zeal-of-the-land-Busy with his relation to Mr. Littlewit's mother-in-law is a very obvious prototype of Mr. Stiggins. The whole atmosphere of the Fair is like the grosser side of Dickens' work. Whether Jonson's comedies will be ever again revived on the stage we do not know; but they are likely to continue long to encourage in fiction a frank and searching presentation of foible and folly.

INTRODUCTION TO VOLPONE

DATE AND DEDICATION

Volpone was produced in 1605. "This celebrated comedy was first brought out at the Globe Theatre in 1605, and printed in quarto, 1607, after having been acted with great applause at both Universities. Jonson published it in 1616, without alterations or additions, and with the former appropriate motto, from Horace.

Simul et jucunda, et idonea dicere vitae."

The motto is taken from Horace's *De Arte Poetica.* The motto means—to tell of what is pleasant and serviceable in life at the same time—and it very briefly states the aim and purpose of the play.

Dr. Sacheverell, in his celebrated sermon in 1710, drew a parallel between Lord Godolphin and Volpone—and it had probably a good deal to do with his prosecution. The workmanship of the play and the dialogue were admired, but the characters were censured a suniformly weak or vicious to allow of the play taking a strong hold on the mind.

The play was well received at the two Universities, and enjoyed wide popularity. Gifford writes. "*The Fox* continued on the stage till the final dispersion of the players, and was one of the first pieces received at the Restoration ; when, as old Downes says, "it proved very satisfactory to the town." Langbaine tells us that it was "in vogue"in his time ; as indeed, it was for a century afterwards.

The dedication of the play to The Two Famous Universities is interesting reading, and throws light on Jonson's personal views on condition of poetry and drama in his time and his purpose in writing *Volpone*. To understand the play, or at least to be safeguarded against mis-

understanding the play, we should do well to refer to the points, raised by Jonson.

First, he speaks of "too much licence of poetasters" of his day. They seem to have degraded poetry, and as a consequence of it, Jonson says that it would be unfair to let the learned suffer, or to look upon poetry with contempt. He maintains that a good poet must first be a good man. He should be "a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master in manners." "Railing rhetoric" as practised by the poets of the day, can be no substitute for poetry. The writers of the day have little of the dignity of a poet, and misuse the name of a poet. In drama they resort to "ribaldry, profanations, blasphemy," Jonson of course, does not put all poets in the same category. For himslf, he has eschewed all profanity and bawdry ; he has been accused of sharpness which he does not deny. He denies that he indulges in personalities. "My works are read, allowed......look into them, what broad reproofs have I used ? where have I been particular? where personal ? except to a mimic, cheater, bawd, or buffoon, creatures, for their insolencies worthy to be taxed ? yet to which of these so pointingly, as he might not either ingenuously have confessed, or wisely dissembled his disease?" All that he writes may be misinterpreted. "I know that nothing can be so innocently written or carried, but may be made obnoxious to construction ; marry, whilst I bear mine innocence about me. I fear it not." Jonson is quite aware that his plays are being deliberately misinterpreted. Scurrilous writers seem to carry the day. The stage has sunk to a low state of degradation "where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, so racked metaphors with brotherly able to violate the ear of a pagan, and blasphemy to turn the blood of a Christian to water." He cannot but view the sorry state of things with indignation and in writing the play he has in mind "instruction and amendment", the restoring of "ancient forms", "manners of the scene, the easiness, the propriety, the

incense, and last, the doctrine, which is the principal end of poesie, to inform men in the best reason of living".

Incidentally, Jonson defends the catastrophe or ending of his, play, *Volpone*. It may be censured because it is not in the true spirit of comedy. The plot ends int he discomfiture and imprisonment of the most vicious. A comedy, as it is conceived, should have a happy ending, and *Volpone* seems to have rather a tragic or semi-tragic ending. "And though my catastrophe may, in the strict vigour of comic law, meet with censure, as turning back my promise ; I desire the learned and charitable critic to have so much faith in me, to think it was done of industry; for, with what ease I could have varied it nearer his scale (but that I fear to boast my own faculty) I could here insert." He defends his departure from the comic tradition by the examples of the ancients, whose comedies are not always joyful and he maintains that it is the part of a comic poet "to imitate justice, and to instruct to life."

PLOT AND CONSTRUCTION

There is not much in the story itself. Volpone and Mosca are the organizers of the plots against the legacy-hunters—Voltore, Carbaccio, and Corvino. Theirs is the main role in the play. They invent new tricks of gulling the legacy-hunters, and all the mirth and amusement are provided by these tricks. The dialogue is lively and relevant. Both dialogue and action collaborate in producing the necessary effect, and is intended to be exhilaratingly comical and humorous. As a classicist, Jonson strictly observes the unities of time, place and action. The action has the duration of a single day; yet there is the dramatic illusion of a series of actions, spread over a pretty long period. The scene does not shift from Venice and its neighbourhood. The interest is sustained from beginning to end. Volpone may know a dull moment now and then, and calls for the services of his dwarf, eunuch and hermaphrodit, but it is doubtful whether the audience knows any dull moment. The play has its well-timed crisis and catastrophe.

The position is very explicitly stated in the argument

The prologue explains the scope and purpose of the play, and also defends Jonson's own plea in maintaining the true dignity of comedy, which he elaborately sets forth in the dedication of the play.

The play opens early in the morning. The first act of Volpone is to feast his eyes on his hoards of wealth, and it is a significant act in that the lust for gold motivates the action. Volpone extracting gifts from the legacy-hunters and the latter being in the run for his fortune. Yet a distinction will have to be made between Volpone and the rest, and when there is a change of policy in giving Mosca the upper hand, there comes the reverse, which prepares the catastrophe of the play. Volpone demands entertainment from the three—Nano, Androgyno and Castrone. It is all clowning in which the Pythagorian doctrine of the transmigration of souls is travested, and it may have little bearing upon the main action of the play except that Jonson could have no other intention than to hold the doctrine up to ridicule and he had a precedent in Lucian's dialogues.

And then the legacy-hunters begin to drop in. Volpone lies on his couch feigning sickness and there seems to be no disease with which he is not afflicted. Incidentally, we are told that this game of gulling the legacy-hunters has been going on for three years, and Volpone has been receiving now and then gifts from them. He is not very much interested in these gifts as in playing with their all-consuming greed. Voltore brings a plate, and Mosca persuades him to believe that he is the only favoured one of the candidates for Volpone's fortune. A few words are enchanged between Volpone and Voltore, and he is confirmed in his hope. Corbaccio is admitted after Voltore. Stricken with age, his senses all impaired, and partially deaf, he mishears Mosca's words, and Mosca makes fun of him without his knowledge. He vies with Voltore, and offers a bag of gold coins against Voltore's plate. Mosca impresses him that he will have the best chance if he will make a will in favour of Voltore, disinheriting his son, and to this the old man with his enfeebled senses readily agrees. Corvino brings a pearl for a present. Mosca tells

Corvino of the late visits and gifts of Voltore and Corbaccio, and of others too, and readily convinces him that he has been made Volpone's heir, and they talk freely in the presence of Volpone who is supposed to be lying unconscious, and is likely to die in a day or two when the will will be published. Corvino is very effusive on hearing all this, and promises Mosca a share in all his fortune. Mosca hints that excepting his gallant wife, he may share all his fortune with him. This hint sends off Corvino at once.

The mention of Corvino's wife rouses a new desire in Volpone. He is little interested in Lady Would-be who is the last to call, and whom he refuses to see. Lady Would-be is introduced in the first act, but as it appears later neither her husband nor she seems to be vitally connected with the action of the play. In the second act we meet Sir Politick Would-be and Peregine. They form a sort of underplot, and into it Lady Would-be is later brought in. The underplot is a weakness on the whole; it seems to have been foisted on the main action. Sir Politick is a caricature of a British diplomat (supposed to be Sir Henry Wotton), and we may say that Jonson widens the scope of his satire, which is primarily directed against greed, and he has had to get in an underplot which is brought into line with the catastrophe of the play by the disgrace and humiliation of Sir Politick in the second scene of the fifth act.

At the end of the first act, Volpone resolves to have a look at Corvino's wife, reputed to be a beauty in Venice, and for this purpose he will put on some disguise. A new phase of development is then expected. At the opening of the second act we meet Sir Politick and Peregrine. Whenever we meet Sir Politick again, there is Peregrine with him and it is the business of Peregrine to expose and ridicule Sir Politick. Sir Politick has plenty of assumption which needs to be exposed, and then he has his pet projects which are so obviously silly. The question is why Sir Politick should have been brought in at all, when he has nothing to do with running after Volpone's fortune. If the play had been enrtiely concerned with the plot and

counter-plot to defeat the purpose of the legacy-hunter, an element of monotony would have been inescapable. The episode of Sir Politick provides a necessary and welcome diversion The defect which we cannot overlook is that it has not been organically connected with the plot. Sir Politick and Peregrine cannot be brought into direct relation with the main group in the play. To carry out his purpose, Volpone disguises himself as a mountebank, and a stage is set up for him and he addresses a crowd of people. And all that Jonson can do is to make Pir Politick and Peregrine present on the scene. In any case they stand apart from the affairs of Volpone and Mosca in relation to the legacy-hunters, and this forms the main action of the Play. By no means can Sir Politick and Peregrine be put into the main action. The only alternative is to consider the episode as an underplot. An underplot should as a rule reflect on the main plot, and have a parallel development. Lady Would-be pays a visit to Volpone in the first act, and comes to see him later again, and simply gets on Volpone's nerves. There is, however, a ruse for Lady Would-be much later when the crisis of the play has developed--and the catastrophe seems imminent. In the second scene of the third act, Lady Would-be pays her second visit just after Mosca has sprung a surprise upon the legacy-hunters by producing the will that makes him heir to Volpone's fortune, and they leave Volpone's house in a mood of despair and frustration—and Lady Would-be goes on plaguing Volpone with her incessant talk. Mosca can get rid of her only by telling her that her husband has been seen with a courtesan of Venice in a gondola. This must have been a clever ruse of Mosca, and he makes a very efficient use it still later. Things get more complicated and Volpone is charged with an attempted rape of Corvino's wife in the court. Lady Would-be comes upon her husband in the company of Peregrine, and she suspects Peregrine to be the courtesan in male disguise. It is the first scene of the fourth act. The crisis has in the meantime occurred. To meet the situation Mosca arranges with Voltore to defend Volpone in the court agianst the attempted charge of rape. The meeting

between Lady Would-be and her husband in the first scene of the fourth act leaves the matter a puzzle. Sir Politick knows nothing of the cause of the misunderstanding with his wife, and when he introduces Peregrine to her, her speech and conduct seem enigmatic and provocative—and all that Sir Politick can do is to run away from his wife When she is left alone with Peregrine, he suspects a trick as the situation becomes compromising to him. Mosca happens to turn up there at the moment. Now he can make a convenient use of Lady Would-be. He tells her that the courtesan in whose company her husband has lately been seen has been arrested. In the second scene of the fourth act, Lady Would-be is produced in the court as a witness against Celia, Corvino's wife, her impression being that Celia is the said courtesan. If Lady Would-be is thus brought into relation with the main action of the play, let it be admitted that it is affected by forced and artificial means. While Sir Politick is kept apart from the main action of the play, his wife is unnecessarily dragged into it at the fag-end of the play. It is a defect of the plot, otherwise well-constructed, which will be apparent to any discerning reader. If anything, the action of Lady Would-be can only be defended as a piece of diversion—and it might have added to the interest of the play without breaking up its unity.

To return to the second act, as we have said, it is on a new line that the action of the play is developing. The question arises here whether Volpone is genuinely interested in Celia, Corvino's wife. Volpone may be a voluptuary. If we study carefully the sixth scene of the thirdact in which Volpone woos and tempts Celia and spends all the wealth of hyperbolic speech, we feel that he is playing a part. Celia in not a woman to yield, and it would have taken Volpone no time to discover that. Now if Volpone had been keen on woman, he should have left Celia alone and sought women of plaint nature. We should say that Volpone is interested neither in gold nor in women. He is an amateur in pleasure and mirth, sensual and otherwise. It is under the window of Corvino's house that the stage is set up for Volpone. disguised as a mountebank,

and he begins to address the people, assembled there, while Sir Politick and Peregrine watch and listen from a distance. From Sir Politick's admiring remarks about an Italianmountebank, it is clear again how cross his ignorance is, and Peregrine knows better and seems to be amused by it. However, Volpone manages to have a view of Corvino's wife at the window. Then Corvino rushes upon him and chases him away with beating. This is the inglorious end to Volpone's adventure as a mountebank. He makes light of the beating, but is he very serious when he complains to Mosca that he is suffering most from the wound of Cupid's dart ? He uses hyperbolic language again—and that it is all fun to him. Mosca promises to get Celia for him. What is he thinking of now ? Not of Celia, but of "the colour of his beard and eyebrows" *i.e.* the disguise he put on when he played the mountebank, and whether in his disguise he could have been recognised by anybody. It is clear that it is all for fun that he went seeking for Celia and he would like to feel like being the lover of a beautiful woman. That is why he wants to have Celia. He seems to lose all interest when Mosca promises to get Celia for him.

This business of getting Celia for Volpone marks the first complication of the plot. In the last scene of the second act, Corvino starts a row with his wife. He abuses her as a whore, demands a vendetta against all her kinsmen, and insinuates the worst about her. He seems to be so solicitous of his honour which has been compromised by Celia's appearance at the window. He announces that she will be henceforth kept in the back of the house, forbidden to step beyond the line, drawn by him until the window is sealed up. While he thus fumes and storms at his life, Mosca knocks at the door. He dismisses his wife and meets Mosca expecting to hear from him the latest news about Volpone. Mosca informs him that Corbaccio and Voltore bought some oil of the mountebank, with which Volpone has been revived, and that further a consultation of physicians being held, they decided that Volpone could be fully restored to health and vigour by the services of a young woman when one of them offered his

own daughter for the purpose. Corvino jumps at the idea that he can as well offer his wife if the doctor can offer his daughter, and that there being no question of his honour being at stake. He seeks out his wife when Mosca is gone and in an unexpectedly changed mood addresses her, and tells her that they have been invited to a feast by Volpone, and that she must put on her best clothes and jewels.

It is the coming of Bonario, Corbaccio's son, that cuts across Moca's plan. He has been expecting Corbaccio with his will ; in his place comes his son. Mosca is not disconcerted. He is going to make use of Bonario (against his father). It would have been all right for Mosca if Corbaccio had turned up at the moment with his new will disinheriting his son. His plan is to make Bonario eavesdrop while his father is made to read the will to Volpone. The plan is disorganized when instead of Corbaccio, Corvino turns up with his wife. Mosca told Corvino to wait until he was sent for, but Corvino is in a hurry to sell his wife's honour. Mosca stows away Bonario, and then there is a long tussle between Corvino and his wife. Celia will not agree to go into the presence of Volpone, and Corvino bullies her. At last, he is persuaded by Mosca to leave his wife there when she will go to Volpone. Before this happens, Volpone has been troubled by the coming of Lady Would-be, when he feigns to be terribly sick, but this will not to until Mosca comes to his rescue, and gets rid of Lady Would-be by telling her that her husband has been lately seen with a courtesan of Venice in a gondola. There is Bonario for Mosca to deal with, and here is Lady Would-be whom Mosca has quickly to send off. Mosca seems quite equal to the occasion. But Corbaccio has not turned up, and there is Corvino with his wife. Mosca could have managed things all right if he could dispose of Corvino and his wife, and if he had had Corbaccio there at the moment. Things seem to be going away, but Mosca who has been lately elated (first scene, third act) by the success of his plotting against the legacy hunters, and particularly by his success with Carvino in easily getting him to bring his wife for the

pleasure of Volpone, believes that he will be able to cope with the situation. We may note here that irony seems to mark the moment of his triumph. Corbaccio has not yet come, and Bonario is getting impatient. Mosca sends Bonario into the gallery where he can entertain himself with books until his father comes. It is at this stage of affairs that Celia is ushered into the presence of Volpone. First, Celia proves intractable, whatever the temptations offered—and they are painted in gorgeous colours—Celia will not yield. He offers her the possession of all his riches :

> See, behold,
> What thou art queen of ; not in expectation,
> As I feed others : but possessed and crowned.

It can have no effect upon Celia. But what does Volpone make of Celia ? The doctrine of *carpe diem*—an appeal to youth and beauty to seize the passing moment and make the most of it seems to have little meaning to Celia with her sober, domestic temperament. Nor can his allusions to Ovid's Tales—to Europa and Jove, and the varied sport of love which Volpone envisages touch Celia's imagination. Let it be noted that there is nothing gross in Volpone's suggestions. Love is a theme to him as to a poet—and it is a poet with his exalted fancy who could have so discoursed about love. So we say again that Volpone could have no serious intention towards Celia. He is caught in the beauty and glamour of sensual pleasure—he is a sensualist *par excellence*, and let it be added that he is a Renaissance figure. It is in playful spirit that he seizes upon Celia—and we doubt if he had really meant to outrage her modesty. The crisis in the play is to be brought on. It is the *dramatic necessity* that Volpone should seize upon Celia, and she would cry out. And there Bonario rushes upon Volpone. It marks the crisis of the play. Bonario leads Celia away—and they are going to bring the matter to the court. After the crisis events take a new turn in the play. The crisis occurs at the end of the third act. After Bonario leaves with Celia, Corbaccio arrives with the will and Mosca reports to him his son's violence when he entered Volpone's house with a drawn sword, looking for his father. Corbaccio is

now satisfied that he has done the right thing in changing his will, and he and Mosca talk about Volpone and whether he is going to die soon. Voltore entering from behind overhears them. Voltore will be of more use to Mosca than anybody else, if he is to redeem the situation. If Voltore suspects Mosca of some tricks, Mosca soon dispels his suspicion and convinces him that the will that Corbaccio has brought, will be used for his interest after his son kills Corbaccio for disinheriting him, for which purpose he was brought there by Mosca tells Voltore. He also tells Voltore how Corvino tried to frustrate his purpose by bringing in his wife whom he wanted to lend to Volpone, and solicits his legal assistance for Volpone who is going to be charged with rape. So a pact is made between Mosca and Voltore.

So Mosca is going to redeem the situation with Voltore's help. And he does it in fact but Volpone's whim again to hunt round and plague the legacy hunters while he signs a will, marking Mosca his heir (certainly in a playful spirit, Volpone is always for fun and mischief), lands him in further and worse troubles. The court-scene is the second scene of the fourth act. The first scene of the fourth act brings Sir Politick and Peregrine again before us. Here we are entertained with the pet and fanciful projects of Sir Politick, and they are so airily expounded to Peregrine, and Peregrine laughs in his sleeve. The dramatic importance of the scene is marked by the coming of Lady Would-be upon her husband in the company of Peregrine, and that immediately after she has been informed by Mosca that he was lately seen with a courtesan in a gondola. Lady Would-be suspects Peregrine to be the courtesan in male disguise a delusion which is soon dispelled by Mosca coming up there. Lady Would-be now comes pat into Mosca's plan. He is going to make use of her as a witness against Celia. So he tells her that the courtesan with whom her husband spent his time, is now under arrest. The court thanks to Voltore's rhetoric and the evidence of tutored witnesses as Corbaccio and Corvino, the latter taking pride in his confessed cuckoldom and revealing his base greed no less than Corbaccio who disinherits his son in favour of Volpone, decides the

issue against Bonario and Celia. Lady Would-be's contributi›n to it is her denunciation of Celia as a harlot for she is under the impression that it is the courtesan who beguiled her husband. The play should have ended here dramatically, but it would have wanted then a vindication of the moral principle, which is Jonson's professed aim in writing the play, and which he adumbrates in his dedication of the plan. We may note here the second scene of the fifth act which is concerned with the ridicule and humiliation to which Sir Politick is subjected by Peregrine's plot. It is the winding-up of the underplot. Lady Would-be meets her rebuff in the first scene of the act along with the legacy-hunters.

The vindication of the moral principle necessitates a fresh tangle. And the tangle is created by Volpone's plot to plague the legacy-hunters to desperation. First, he sends out Castrone and Nano to make known that he is dead. Next, he signs a will, making Mosca his heir, all in fun, and as the legacy-hunters, on hearing of the news of Volpone's death, drop in, under Volpone's directions, Mosca sits at a table, and makes an inventory, enumerating the items, and keeps his visitores waiting, and at last brings out the will. They are astounded, and leave the place in disgust and despair. Here Volpone should have drawn the line, as Mosca warned him, but he is all for fun and mischief in which all his interest and pleasure lie,and not in gold and women, and he wants to hunt about and persecute the legacy-hunters, and disguises himself as a sergeant for the purpose, and sends out Mosca, now his declared heir, pressed as a magnifico of Venice. Does he take lightly the risk of giving Mosca the upperhand in the matter by declaring him his heir? Yes, he does, and we say again that he is interested neither in his gold nor in women. Secondly, it is a *dramatic necessity*. He has been playing with the legacy-hunters, and Mosca has till now been acting as his agent and carried out his plans. Now Mosca may have different views and act on his own. Volpone is shrewd and intelligent, and with his eyes open, he entrusts Mosca with power that may finally crush him. Then Voltore, conscience-stricken as he seems to be,

rebels, and there is a new development – and the verdict that has been given against Bonario and Celia, is going to be reversed Mosca attempts to save the situation again, and this he does by taking advantage of his present position, and he confirms the report of Volpone's death. It is now Volpone's turn to act. He is present in the court disguised as a sergeant. He throws off his disguise and confronts Mosca. He is now the master, and Mosca the parasite. So, the crash comes upon the greedy legacy-hunters as well as upon Volpone and Mosca who played with them. The innocence of Bonario and Celia is vindicated, and the moral principle is upheld.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAYS

The characters of the play are well-defined and fully individualized, but they do not need to be analysed and discussed in detail except the character of Volpone which has beed partly expounded in the previous section. Mosca has an active role in the play—he carries out the plans of Volpone against the legacy-hunters, and sometimes the plans are Mosca's own too. Volpone seems to have more or less a passive role, feigning sickness and lying on a couch, and exchanging but a few words or no words with his visitors. The legacy-hunters bring him gifts, but he seems to be less interested in these gifts than in gulling the givers of these gifts. The play is a satire upon greed, and greed is incarnate in the old Corbaccio, in the shrewd Voltore. and in the infatuated Corvino : but we do not think that it is so manifest in Volpone. Volpone has a real gusto in life. If anything, he is an Epicurean—a pleasure-hunter. Life is all fun and joy to him, and he wants to make the most of it. He is not really interested in gold and women. His main pleasure seems to be the making fun of the legacy-hunters. He seems to exist for nothing else than the castigation of the vice of greed. He cannot be charged with the vice that he ridicules and exposes in others. If otherwise, he could not have been so reckless as to make Mosca his heir. Greed makes a man circumspect, and Volpone is shrewd in his own way, but is not circumspect. He will not sparethe greedy fellows

he comes across. He throws away his own wealth too in pursuit of his game. The semi-tragic ending of the play is conditioned by his character, and critics have objected to the semi-tragic ending. Volpone has been described as a villian along with other characters in the play. But it cannot be the right approach. Volpone is kept distinct from other characters. His detachment is noteworthy ; it is almost self-detachment. We mean even a detachment from all that he owns and possesses. In the last scene he parts with his possessions without a word of regret. The judgment pronounced upon is :

> That thy substance all be straight confiscate
> To the hospital of the Incurable ;
> And since the most was got by imposture,
> By feigning lame, gout, palsy and such diseases,
> Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with irons,
> Till thou be'st sick and lame indeed.

He takes the sentence easy, and his comment is light hearted.

> This is called the mortifying of the fox.

To describe Volpone as "a monster of villainy", as A.H. Thorndike does, is anything but fair. Volpone is there to punish the villainy of others. He has been created by Jonson as an instrument of punishment. He does not act like a villain anywhere in the play ; on the other hand, his efforts have been to outwit the villains. To tar all the characters in the play with the same brush, as critics have done, is to misinterpret the conception of the play and the dramatist's own intention. F.E. Schelling writes "Its subject is a struggle of art applied to chicanery ; for among its *dramatis personae*, from the villainous Fox himself, his rascally servant Mosca, Voltore (the vulture), Corbaccio and Corvino (the big and the little ravens), to Sir Politick Would-be and the rest, *there is scarcely a virtuous character in the play.*" What about Celia ? Is she not a virtuous character ? The moral drift of the play hinges on Celia ; Celia is an importance character in the play, and the reverses that come upon Volpone and the punishment of the villains in the play, stem from Celia's defence of her honour.

Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino are each distinguished from the other. Mosca adopts his tricks to each individual temperament—and the tricks test their character. And the play has been rightly described as "a vigorous exposure of greed and iniquity." It is the greed and iniquity of these legacy-hunters that are exposed through the agency of Volpone—and it cannot be right then to class Volpone with them. They are all fed with hopes that will not materialize. Voltore, while his name signifies his rapacious greed, seems to have been treated with a little more respect than either Corbaccio or Corvino. The depravity of Corbaccio and Corvino goes further that the shifts of a wicked lawyer as they are displayed in the trial scene. Apart from his greed he has been satirized as a lawyer. There is some impulsiveness in his character When he believes that he has been outwitted by Mosca, he rebels and proceeds to expose the villains when the case is retried. He gives it out that he is conscience-stricken. It may be doubted whether he has conscience at all, for he changes the front the next moment, and after going into a fit, possessed by the devil as he is reputed to be, he retracts his statement. It is the venality of a lawyer that is exposed here. Corbaccio and Corvino are much worse. Corbaccio is a dotard, but is consumed by greed. And to grab Volpone's fortune, he wills away his property to him, disinheriting his son. His conduct evokes Volpone's very pertinent comments :

> So many cares, so many maladies,
> So many fears attending on old age,
> Yea, death so often called on, as no wish
> Can be more frequent with them, other limbs faint,
> Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing, going,
> All dead before them : yea, their very teeth
> Their instruments of eating, failing them ;
> Yet this is reckoned life ! nay, here was one.
> Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer !

Corvino seems be the worst of the lot. He jealously guards his wife, who is known to be beauty in Venice, and seems to be so tryingly sensitive about his honour which, he thinks, has been compromised by his wife

appearing at the window and dropping her handkerchief to Volpone, disguised as a mountebank—and makes such a tremendous fuss over it, abusing his wife in the vilest terms and denouncing the most terrible punishment upon her; yet he is ready to sell his *wife's honour*. His character is rightly analysed in Mosca's strictures :

> Me thinks, of all, you should have been the example.
> Why should you stay here ? with what thought, what promise ?
> Hear you ; do you not know, I know you an ass,
> And that you would most fain have been a wittol
> If fortune would have let you ? that you are
> A declared cuckold, on good terms ?

Mosca may be considered the villain of the piece. He functions right as Volpone's parasite so long he is kept in his place. He gulls the legacy-hunters on the initiative of Volpone, and often by his own ingenious tricks. Let credit be given him as a brainy fellow. But his ambition is roused when Volpone, out of mere fun and in order to castigate the legacy-hunters, makes him his heir. Volpone also makes a blunder by getting the report of his death spread in the city. Now Mosca proceeds to oust Volpone and Volpone has to come forward to defeat his design. There is a single virtuous character in the play; it is Celia who will not surrender or honour hon any terms. Her defence of her honour against Volpone's subtle assault finally decides the fates of all in the play. Sir Politick Would-be comes into the underplot, and is a minor figure. He is a presumptuous politician with little knowledge, experience and insight. His fatuous projects of which he thinks so much, make him all the more ridiculous. Peregrine makes a laughing-stock of him, and exposes his stupidity. His humiliation of which he is little conscious. when he puts a tortoise shell on his head, and crawls about to the amusement of the three merchants whom Peregrine brings in, marks the climax of comedy in the play. Lady Would-be is certainly a little more intelligent than her husband. Sir Politick tells Peregrine that what has brought him to Venice is :

A peculiar humour of my wife's
Laid for this height of Venice, to observe,
To quote, to learn the language, and so forth.

We may quote here also Peregrine's comment :

Your lady
Lies here in Venice, for intelligence
Of tires and fashions, and behaviour,
Among the courtesans? The fine Lady Would-be ?

It does not, however appear that Lady Would-be visits brothels or associates with courtesans. But she goes out of her way to pay a visit to Volpone. It seems questionable, and her motive is not stated anywhere. If Sir Politick had been mixed up with the affairs of Volpone or the legacy-hunters, Lady Would-be could have been brought into connection with Volpone. Her action in visiting Volpone twice seems unmotivated. Later she is dragged into the trial-scene. The last time she caters, she meets Mosca, and not Volpone, and Mosca drops a hint—

Remember what your ladyship offered me
To put you in an heir.

The hint is that she offered to be Mosca's mistress if he would get her admitted as heir to Volpone. It is open to us whether we should believe Mosca or not. Here it is made to appear that Lady Would-be is one of the legacy-hunters—but there is little evidence of it in the play. After all she seems to be a learned lady; she quotes Plato and is acquainted with the literary fads of the time, and knows Pastor Fido and Montaigne. Jonson may intend a satire upon pedantry. Peregrine needs little notice. He is used as an instrument for exposing the character of Sir Politick. He embodies sound common sense and sharp observation and realistic outlook as contrasted with the presumption, fantastic illusion and cross stupidity of Sir Politick.

RENAISSANCE COLOUR IN THE PLAY

Lust for power, lust for gold, a passion for sensuous beauty, a craving for sensual pleasure with a spirit of revolt against conventional morality, were all generated

by the Renaissance. "Expect things greater than thy larger hopes to overtake thee"—these are the words that Sejanus addresses to the corrupt physician. Eudenius. They seem to hold gold of the fortune-hunters in *Volpone*. "They express what it is that links together all the main figures in the Jonson gallery"—writes *L. C. Knights*.

We may quote Knights again : "The issues with which he chose to deal were among the most deeply ingrained preoccupations of his age.........The great re-direction of human energies known as the Renaissance is no longer seen, as it was half a century ago, simple as a movement of liberation, a necessary and glorious stage in the great march of Progress. When we think of the sixteenth century we think not only of "the Development of the 'Individual', 'the Revival of Antiquity', 'the Discovery of the World and of Man', but of the thrust of capitalist enterprise, the rise of economic individualism, the development of an a-moral 'realism' in political thought and action. We are aware, above all, of a great reorientation of attitude that prepared the way not only for the scientific achievement of the seventeenth century and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, but for the materialism of industrial civilization, the spiritual bewilderment of the nineteenth century, and the urgent anxieties of our own time................ But even when we recognize the great achievements of the age, we have to recognize also that it was (as most ages are) double-faced. The positive side lay in the more unfettered development of energies that could be made to serve—and have served—the cause of human living. The negative side was an inflation of the will at the expense of the spirit, the acceptance, *as an ideal*, of the desire to assert oneself, to use and dominate. And it was an ideal that could easily be invested with a cerain spurious glamour.

> Lay out our golden wedges to the view,
> That their reflections may amaze the Pirieans.
> Is it not passing brave to be king,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis ?

And with our sun-bright armour, as we march,
We'll chase the stars from heaven, and dim
their eyes
That stand and muse at our admired arms.

These quotations from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* may serve to represent the element of fantasy that accompanied the attitudes of the new age to riches, pomp, and power.

" It is precisely this aspect of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance world that, in his greater plays, Jonson takes for theme and, we may say, de-glamourizes. It may be suspected that in dealing critically with exaggerated claims that the individual may make on the world, an excessive assertion of the self, he himself was deeply engaged."

It is the "inflation of the will at the expense of the spirit" which is reflected in *Volpone*. Lust for gold is just an aspect of it. And it reveals an age when competition for riches had already started, and as we see in *Valpone*, principle, character or honour counted little in the pursuit of wealth. Passion for money, passion for power, passion for knowledge were all offshoots of the Renaissance. How these can degenerate Jonson shows in his plays. The glamour with which they were invested, for example, by Marlowe, is no longer there. This is meant by saying that Jonson has de-glamourized them.

Marlowe and Jonson tread the same ground. Both deal with Renaissance longings, desires and passions. We find the grandiose scale in Marlowe, and as they are exhibited in individuals who reach the superhuman level, a sort of admiration is extorted from us. In Jonson's plays we see these longings, desires and passions exhibited in all their degradation.

The paralleiism between Marlowe and Jonson has been noticed by the critics. T. S. Eliot writes, "Jonson is the legitimate heir of Marlowe. The man who wrote in *Volpone* :

for thy love
In varying figures, I would have contended
With the blue Proteus, or the horned flood......

and

See, a carbuncle
May put out both the eyes of our Saint Mark :
A diamond would have bought Lollia Paulina,
When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels...

is related to Marlowe as a poet ; and if Marlowe is a poet, Jonsons is also. And, if Jonson's comedy is a comedy of humours, then Marlowe's tragedy, a large part of it, is a tragedy of humours." T.S. Eliot is right in quoting the verses, which show that the scene between Volpone and Celia (Act III, Sc. vi) is in the Marlowesque vein. Volpone with his poetic imagination taking hold of him and passion a-glow, is a replica of one of Marlowes heroes. Here is exhibited the romantic love such as Dr. Faustus conceived for Helen.

T.S. Eliot rightly points out that if Jonson has written the "humour" comedy, Marlowe has written the "humour" tragedy. Whatever the passion, whether it is love of money, or love of power, or love of knowledge, it becomes an obsession. It was certainly an obsession in the case of Marlowe's heroes; for Jonsons heroes it became a "hobby" or a folly, or a vice. While Marlowe could applaud the obsession and give his hero an exalted position Jonson can but satirize the vice. Jonson mirrors the post-Renaissance world in his plays. The faded lustre of the Renaissance seems to be caught up into Volpone's mood, sentiments and vision when he talks of love to Celia. It seems to have shifted away for a while from the aatmosphere of vile greed.

Volpone has a marked distinction from other characters in the play. This distinction lies in the Renaissance bias and mould of his character. His gusto, his quest of pleasure as is to be found in new experience, his love of fun and mirth to stave off moments of depression, his detachment and liberated intelligence (so that we find him none the worse for the loss of his wealth and property, and for his imprisonment)—all these go to show the trailing influence of a culture which is now a thing of the past. His comments on old age (which we have quoted above (Act I in reference to Corbaccio) would befit a Renaissance chrac_

cter again ; so also characteristic his superiority complex and his contempt for the fool, whom he has to tackle with Volpone as a character breathes the very spirit of the Renaissance. Walter Pater describes the Renaissance as a whole complex movement : " For us the Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely view of conceiving life, make themselves felt, urging those who experience this desire to search out *first* one and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment, and directing them not only to the discovery of old and forgotten source of this enjoyment, but to the divination of fresh source thereof-new experiences, new subjects of poetry, new forms of art." Volpone is distinguished by his passion for enjoyment, intellectual or imaginative, if on a lower level than that of an artist. There is too in him the desire to search out new experiences – and this explains his conceiving a new idea of harassing the legacy-hunters after he has been cleared of all blame in the court, and setting up Mosca as his heir without minding the cost.

"*The Fox* is a Renaissance, not a Medieval Morality" *Arthur Sale*.

The question needs to be discussed. To make such a statement is to deny the character of comedy to *Volpone*. The Morality is a primitive kind of drama, and we do not see how *Volpone*, an accomplished comedy, can bear any resemblance to a moraltity. The morality is run on abstract ideas or embodiments of abstract ideas, and the motive is the enforcement of moral truth as a guide to human conduct. The abstract ideas may be virtues, as Justice, Mercy, Compassion; or vices, as Avarice, Malice, Falsehood ; or a state, or condition, or mode of life, as Youth, Old Age, Poverty, Abominable living ; or an embodiment of the human race, as in the character *Every Man*, one of the moralities; or of a part of it, as in the play of *Lusty Juventus*; or of the end of all men, for in these compositions Death is not infrequently embodied. There are also stock-characters, as the Devil and the Vice—the former being an inheritance from miracle-plays, but the

latter is a new creation. The Devil was represented as the hideous monster, evolved by the morbid imagination of the dark ages, having horns, at least one hoof, a tail, a shaggy body, and a visage both frightful and ridiculous. The Vice wore generally, if not always, the costume of the domestic fool, or jester of the period, which is now worn by clowns of the circus. The Vice became distinct line of character—and his name and functions were those of Infidelity, Hypocrisy, Desire, and so forth. Sometimes, the part of a gallant or bully was written for the Vice, and was named accordingly ; and sometimes he was called Iniquity. When he bore this name, he would seem to have been not a mere buffoon or clown, making merriment with gibes and antics, but a sententious person, with all his fun ; for Shakespeare *Richard* III, iii, i) makes the following descriptive mention of this kind of Vice :—

> Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,
> I moralize two meanings in one word.

But the Vice generally performed the mingled functions of scamp, braggart, and practical joker.

It has been necessary to give a detailed account of the morality play above to clear all misunderstanding about it. We can assume little affinity between *Volpone* and a morality play as such. One might fancy that the function of the Devil and the Vice has been distributed between Nano, Castrone and Androgyno, and the abstract idea (here it is *avarice*) is embodied in all the main characters, Volpone included. But we should not forget the fundamental difference in the conception and structure of a morality and a comedy. The morality play represents the primitive stage of drama and comedy shows a process of evolution. We do not deny that some elements of a morality play may be present in a comedy. The Fool in a comedy—and Shakespear's comedy has always a fool—is a later development of the Vice, and for that reason nobody will identify the Fool of a comedy with the Vice of a morality, or a comedy with a morality. The function of a Fool has changed from that of the Vice. We may take Touchstone in *As You Like It*—And Touchstone has very

little in common with his progenitor, the Vice. So Nano, Castreno and Androgyno cannot be aligned with the Vice. Then again abstract ideas are the personages in a morality ; in a comedy there are living characters, and each living character represents some idea or other. An abstraction is one thing, and a living character is another. The very fact of the presence of living characters in a comedy precludes it from being classed with a morality Lastly there is a much richer and broader conception in a comedy than there can be in a morality. Humour, wit, characterization, development of the action stage by stage mark a new *genre*. All that we have in a morality is horse-play—coarse, rough, boisterous fun, nothing of fine humour and intellectual wit, nothing of characterization. It is little short of absurd to think of *Volpone* as a morality of any kind, with its advanced technique, with the subtle play of wit (as in the ig of Nano, Castrone and Androgyno), with its chastened merriment with the interweaving of plot and counterplot.

Arthur Sale concedes that *Volpone*, a morality as he takes it to be, breaks away from the murky medieval atmosphere. The concession that *Volpone* captures the breath and spirit of the Renaissance, demolishes the plea that Volpone is a morality. The morality is typical of the medieval standard of life and outlook, the medieval conception of morals and theology. Medieval theology, we should say, is the central cojre of a morality, and the Renaissance outlook is a total breakaway from the medieval conception of life. If the Renaissance spirit and outlook enter largely into *Volponè*, we cannot understand how it can be approximated to a morality.

Arthur Sale seems to have been misled by Jonson's emphasis on the moral issue of the play. Jonson professes, in his dedication of the play, to reform the comedy of the day, and reiterates the same purpose in his prologue. Comedy has sunk into "ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all licence of offence to God and man." Jonson desires to lift the comedy out of the rut. His *Volpone* is an attempt to cure the ills from which the comedy of the day suffers. So he writes, "I have laboured for their instruction and

amendment, to reduce not only the ancient forms, but manners of the scene, the easiness, the propriety, the innocence, and last, the doctrine, which is the principal end of poesie to inform men in the best reason of living." To inform men in the best reason of living is Jonson's moral purpose. And Arthur Sale, therefore, calls Volpone a morality under the influence of the Renaissace. It is never contended that comedy should have no moral. 'The best reason of living', as Jonson puts it, 'is the matter for comedy as well as tragedy, nay for all art and literature'. Moral issues of life with which art and literature must deal are not the same thing as the play of morality.

"Question has been raised as to whether a story so forbidding can be considered a comedy, for, although the plot ends in the discomfiture and imprisonment of the most vicious, it involves no mortal catastrophe."—*Felix E Schelling.*

Volpone is not, in any case, a "forbidding" play. It provides plenty of fun, mirth and innocent laughter. Humour simply bubbles over it, and there is also a display of art, if not too subtle and elusive. There is nothing to complain about it as a good and genuine comedy. The characters have been branded as villains by some critics We do not know what the word--*villain*--exactly means to these critics. The two repulsive characters are Corbaccio and Corvino. If what Jonson aims at in the play—a scathing, relentless satire upon avarice, he has got to introduce such characters—and they are only wo. There is nothing repulsive about either Volpone or Mosca. Mosca has a strain of villainy in him, and it manifests itself when, being set up by Volpone as his heir, he seeks to displace Volpone himself. Volpone shows himself to be something of an artist in gulling the legacy-hunters, and as such he cannot bother about moral scruples. We must say that living in a world of knaves, he must know how to deal with knaves. Volpone cannot be accused of any actual villainy. He rather makes it his life's mission to defeat the any of others--the legacy-hunters as well as of Mosca. He might have dishonoured Celia, but Celia remains unharmed—and must remain unharmed, or Johnson's moral

purpose cannot be fulfilled—and it means too that Jonson must keep Volpone out of villainy. He is used as an instrument by Jonson—he is made to reveal and hold up to ridicule the naked, shameless avarice in others. He that touches pitch, shall be defiled therewith. Volpone catches the taint from others. Then there is the radiant figure of Celia. She is meek and not self-assertive, but resistant to vice. If there is the impression of the repulsiveness of vice (as it is exhibited in Corbaccio and Corvino—Corbaccio disinheriting his son and Corvino selling his wife to grab Volpone's property), Celia and Bonario who rescues Celia from shame, provide the relief to it. Ultimately virtue triumphs and vice is worsted. So there can be no question that the story is so forbidding." Let it be noted too that no actual villainy is committed. The legacy-hunters are duped—and they deserve it, and it is the punishment of vice. And it is comedy, because it has the true comic vein and spirit, and overflows with fun and mirth at the expense of the demons of avarice and of the fool, Sir Politick.

There is another question raised here—the moral purpose of the play. The qestion is whether it is not alien to the spirit of comedy. Comedy should have nothing to do with a moral question; that is the view of some critics. "The dicomfiture and imprisonment of the most vicious" is the crux of the matter. It is usurping the function of tragedy; that is how some critics look at it. Jonson justifies the punishment of the vicious in comedy by the example of the ancients, and also because, as he conceives it, "it is the office of a comic poet to imitate justice, and instruct to life." Schellingis prepared to consider *Volpone* a comedy because it has to do with the punishment of the vicious, "it involves no mortal catastrophe". He means that *Volpone* has nothing to do with killings, which tragedy involves. We may quote Schelling again and there we shall have the true perspective. "But Jonson was on sound historical ground, for 'Volpone' is conceived far more logically on the lines of the ancients' theory of comedy than was ever the romantic drama of Shakespeare however, repulsive we may find a philosophy of life that

facilely divides the world into the rogues and their dupes and, identifying brains with roguery and innocence with folly, admires the former while inconsistently punishing them." Let it be added, however, that there are Banario and Celia in the play, and so the world is not divided into rogues and their dupes, and nor is innocence indentified with folly, for the legacy-hunters are after all shown to be fools and they are not innocent.

OPINIONS OF CRITICS

The Fox is indubitably the best production of its author, and in some points of substantial merit yields to nothing which the English stage can oppose to it ; there is a bold and happy spirit in the fable, it is of moral tendency, female chastity and honours are beautifully displayed, and punishment is inflicted on the delinquents of the drama with strict ane exemplary justice. The characters of *Haeredepetae*, depicted under the titles of birds of prey, *Voltore*, *Corbaccio*, and *Corvino*. are warmly coloured, happily contrasted and faithfully supported from the outset to the end ; *Volpone* who gives his name to the piece, with a fox-like craftiness, deludes and gulls their hopes by the agency of his inimitable Parasite, or (as the Greek and Roman authors expressed it) by his *Fly*, his *Mosca*; and in this finished portrait Jonson may throw the gauntelet to the greatest masters of antiquity; the character is of classic origin ; it Is found with the contemporaries of Aristophanes, though not in any comedy of his now existing ; the Middle Dramatists seem to have handled it very frequently, and in the New Comedy it rarely failed to find a place. Plautus his it again and again, but the aggregate merit of all his Parasites will not weigh in the scale against the single *Fly* of our poet. The incident of his concealing *Bonario* in the gallery, from whence he breaks in upon the scene to the rescue of Celia, and the detection of *Volpone*, is one of the happiest contrivances which could possibly by devised, because at the sametime that it produces the the catastrophe, it does no sacrifice *Mosca's* character in the manner most villains are sacrificed in comedy, by making them commit blunders, which do not corresponed with the address their first representation

exhibits, and which the audience has a right to expect from them throughout, of which the *Double Dealer* is amongst others a notable instance. But this incident of *Bonario's* interference does not only impeach the adroitness of the Parasite, but it furnishes a very brilliant occasion for setting off his ready invention and presence of mind in a new and superior light, and serve to introduce the whole machinery of the trial and condemnation of the innocent persons before the court of *Advocates*. In this part of the fable the contrivance is inimitable, and here the poet's art is a study, which every votarist of the dramatic Muses, ought to pay attention and respect to: had the same address been exerted throughout, the construction would have been a matchlesspiece of art, but here we are to lament the haste of which he boasts in his prologue and that rapidity of composition which he appeals to as a mark of genius, is to be lamented as the probable cause of incorrectness, or at least the best and most candid plea in excluse of it. For who can deny that nature is violated by the absurdity of *Volpone's* unseasonable insult to the very persons who had witnessed falsely in his defence, and even to the very *Advocate*, who had so successfully defended him? Is it in character for a man of his deep cunning and long reach of thought to provoke those on whom his all depended to retaliate upon him, and this for the poor triumph of a silly jest? Certainly, this is a glaring defect, which everybody must lament and which can escape nobody. The poet himself knew the weak part of his plot, and anaily strives to bolster it up by making *Volpone* exclaim against his own folly—

> I am caught in mine own noose—

And again:

> To make a snare for mine own neck! and run
> My head into it wilfully! with laughter!
> When I had newly scaped, was free and clear,
> Out of mere wantonness! O, the dull devil
> Was in this brain of mine when I devised it,
> And Mosca gave it second———
> ———these are fine conceits!
> I must be merry, with a mischief to me

What a vile wretch was I, that could not bear
My fortune soberly? I must have my crotchets,
And my conundrums!

It is with regret I feel myself compelled to protest against so pleasant an episode as that which is carried on by *Sir Politick Would-be* and *Peregrine*, which in fact produces a kind of double plot and catastrophe : this is an imperfection in the fable which criticism cannot overlook ; but *Sir Politick* is altogether so delightful a fellow, that it is impossible to give a vote for his exclusion ; the most that can be done against him is to lament that he has not more relation to the main business of the fable.

The judgment pronounced upon the criminals in the conclusion of the play is so just and solemn that I must think the poet has made a wanton breach of character, and gained but a sorry jest by the bargain, when he violates the dignity of his court of judges by making one of them so abject in his flattery to the Parasite upon the idea of matching him with his daughter, when he hears that Volpone has made him his heir , but this is an objection that lies with in the compass of two short lines, spoken aside from the bench, and may easily be remedied by their omission in representation; it is one only, and that a very slight one, amongst those venial blemishes—

quas incuria fudit.

It does not occur to me that any other remark is left for me to make upon this celebrated drama that could convey the slighest censure ; but very many might be made in the highest strain of commendation, if there was need of any more than general testimony to such acknowledged merit. *The Fox* is a drama of so peculiar a species, that it cannot be dragged into a comparison with the production of any other modern poet whatsoever ; its construction is so dissimilar from anything of Shakespeare's writing, that it would be going greatly out of our way, and a very gross abuse of criticism, to attempt to settle the relative degrees of merit where the characters of the writers are so widely opposite. In one we may respect the profundity of learning, in the other we must admire

the sublimity of genius; to one we pay the tribute of understanding, to the other we surrender up the possession of our hearts; Shakespeare with ten thousand spots about him dazzles us with so bright a lustre, that we either cannot or will not see his fault; he gleams and flashes like a meteor which shoots out of our sight before the eye can measure its proportions, or analyse its properties--but Jonson stands still to be surveyed, and presents so bold a front, and levels it so fully to our view, as seems to challenge the compass and the rule of the critic, and defy him to find out an error in the scale and composition of his structure.

Putting aside therefore any further mention of Shakespeare, who was a poet out of all rule, and beyond all compass of criticism, one whose excellencies are above comparison, and his errors beyond number, I will venture an opinion that this drama of *The Fox* is, critically speaking, the nearest to perfection of any one drama, comic or tragic which the English stage is at this day in possession of.

The characters of Shakespeare are such as might exist in different circumstances than those in which Shakespeare set them. The latter appear to be those which extract from this characters the most intense and interesting realization but that realization has not exhausted their possibilities. Volpone's life, on the other hand, is bounded by the scene in which it is played; in fact, the life is the life of the scene, and is derivatively the life of Volpone; the life of the character, is inseparable from the life of the drama. This is not dependence upon a background, or upon a substratum of fact. The emotional effect is single and simple. Whereas in Shakespeare the effect is due to the way in which the characters *act upon* one another, in Jonson it is given by the way in which the characters *fit in* with each other. The artistic result of *Volpone* is not due to any effect that Volpone Mosca, Corvino, Corbaccio, Voltore have upon each other, but simply to their combination into a whole. And these figures are not personifications of passions; separately, they have not even that eality, they are constituent. It is a similar indication of Jonson's method that you can hardly pick out a line of Jonson's and say confidently that

great poetry ; but there are many extended passages to which you cannot deny that honour.

> I will have all my beds blown up not stuft ;
> Down is too hard ; and then, mine oval room
> Fill'd with such pictures as Tiberius took
> From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
> But coldly imitated. Then, my glasses
> Cut in more subtle angles, to disperse
> And multiply the figures, as I walk...

Jonson is the legitimate heir of Marlowe. The man who wrote, in *Volpone* :

> for thy love,
> In varying figures, I would, have contended.
> With the blue Proteus, or the horned flood...

And

> See, a carbuncle
> May put out both the eyes of our Saint Mrak,
> A diamond would have bought Lollia Paulina
> When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels......

is related to Marlowe as a poet, and if Marlowe is a poet Jonson is also.And if Jonson's comedy is a comedy of humours, then Marlowe's tragedy, a large part of it, is a tragedy of humours.But Jonson has too exclusively been considered as the typical representative of a point of view towards comedy. He has suffered from his great reputation as a critic and theorist, from the effects of his intelligence. We have been taught to think of him as the man, the dictator (confusedly in our minds with his later namesake), as the literary politician impressing his views upon a generation ; we are offended by the constant reminder of his scholarship. We forget the comedy in the humours, and the serious artist in the scholar. Jonson has suffered in public opinion, as anyone must suffer who is forced to talk about his art.

If you examine the first hundred lines or more of *Volpone* the verse appears to be in the manner of Marlowe more deliberate, more mature, but without Marlowe's inspiration. It looks like mere rhetoric, certainly not 'deeds and language such as men do use.' It appears to

us, in fact, forced and flagitous bombast. That it is not 'rhetoric', or at least not vicious rhetoric, we do not know until we are able to review the whole play. For the consistent maintenance of this manner conveys in the end an effect not of verbosity, but of bold, even shocking and terrifying directness. We have difficulty in saying exactly what produces this simple and single effect. It is not in any ordinary way due to management of intrigue. Jonson employs immense dramatic constructive skill ; it is not so much skill in plot as skill in doing without a plot........... In *Volpone, or The Alchemist*, or *The Silent Woman*, the plot is enough to keep the players in motion ; it is rather an 'action' than a plot. The plot does not hold the play together ; what holds the play together is a unity of inspiration that radiates into plot and personages alike.

—*T. S. Eliot*

Volpone is a Venetian magnifico, old, rich childless and a passionate devotee of every form of enjoyment, in particular the enjoyment of gold. Surrounded by false friends anxious to inherit form him, he gives out that he is dying, and by persuading each of them that he is the heir designate obtains magnificent presents from them all. Any one of them, out of a frenzied cupidity equal to Volpone's own, is capable of sacrificing honour, child or wife to his chance of engrossing the inheritance. Between Volpone, the Fox, and these appropriately named beasts of prey-the lawyer, Voltore or Vulture, the dying Corbaccio or Old Crow, and the Merchant, Corvino or Little Crow the intermediary is Mosca or Fly, Volpone's parasite and a trimmer of infinite resource. There is something famished and superhuman in the passion of all these characters. Volpone's thirst for gold is as vehement, if not as poetic, as that which torments Marlowe's Jew of Malta. Yet the enormity of the fraud he has organised is an even greater joy to him than his gold. For sheer ferocity, no scene has ever surpassed that in which the aged, crippled, blear-eyed Corbaccio, with one foot in the grave, comes to sniff at the body of the man whose death he has discounted, or that other scene in which Corvino, whom a trifle has roused to vent a fit of terrible jealousy on his wife, the pure Celia,

drags her, by threats and violence, to the presence of Volpone, who has made this surrender a condition of the succession to his property. In yet another and no less ferocious scene, Volpone, who has been given up to justice, is shown standing his trial. Each of his dupes comes forward to speak for him, each of them warmly eloquent, improving on the statements of the rival he uneasily watches, and inventing the more abominable lies, even against a son or a wife exculpate the accused man.

The playwright's vigour, his clever manipulation of the threads of his plot and the strong construction render almost credible the inhuman situation which is the subject of the play. But its success is void of the element of fun, for the atrocity of the satire excludes laughter.

—*Emile Legouis.*

To my good friend Master Jonson

The strange new follies of this idle age,
In strange new forms, presented on the stage
By thy quick muse, so pleased judicious eyes ;
That th' once admired ancient comedies'
Factions, like clothes grown out of fashion, lay
Locked up from use ; until thy Fox' birthday,
In an old garb, showed so much art, and wit,
As they the laurel gave to thee, and it.

D.D.

On Volpone

Come yet, more forth, Volpone, and thy chase
Perform to all length, for thy breath will serve thee,
The usurer shall never wear thy case ;
Men do not hunt to kill, but to preserve thee,
Before the best hounds, thou dost, still, but play.—
And, for our whelps, alas, they yelp in vain ;
Thou hast no earth ; thou hunt' st the milkwhite way;
And, through th' Elysian fields, dost make thy train.
And as the symbol of life's guard the hare.
That, sleeping, wakes; and, for her fear was saf't;

So, thou shalt be advanced, and make a star,
Pole to all wits, believed in, for thy craft,
In which the senses both mark, and mystery.
Is hit, and sounded, to please best, and worst ;
To all which, since thou mak'st so sweet a cry,
Take all thy best fare, and be nothing curst.

G.C.

Questions (covering *Introduction*)

Q. 1. *Volpone* is said to be one of very skilfully constructed plays. Analyse the plot and point out if there is any defect in it.

Q. 2. What is the professed aim or purpose of Jonson in writing *Volpone* ? (*Date and Dedication*).

Q. 3. Is a detailed study of the characters of *Volpone* necessary ? If not, why ?

Q. 4. How does Volpone impress you ? What is the distinction between him and other characters ?

Q. 5 Volpone is not a villain like his dupes. Do you defend the view ? (*Characters of the play* and *Renaissance. Colour*).

Q. 6. The Renaissance lift its stamp upon *Volpone*. Explain.

Q. 7. What do you think of the view that *Volpone* is a morality play, written in the age of the Renaissance ?

Q. 8 Is *Volpone* too forbidding a play to afford mirth and laughter ?

Q. 9 The main issue of the play hinges on Celia. Discuss. (*Plot and Construction*).

Q. 10. Does Jonson's emphasis on the moral question compromise the character of the play as a comedy ? (*Quotation from Schelling*).

VOLPONE ; OR, THE FOX

To the most noble and equal sisters,.

THE TWO FAMOUS UNIVERSITIES,.

For their love and acceptance shown to his poem in the Presentation,

BEN JONSON,

The grateful acknowledger

DEDICATES BOTH IT AND HIMSELF.

Never, most equal Sisters, had any man a wit so presently excellent, as that it could raise itself ; but there must come both matter, occasion, commenders, and favourers to it. If this be true, and that the fortune of all writers doth daily prove it, it behoves the careful to provide well towards these accidents ; and, having acquired them, to preserve that part of reputation most tenderly, wherein the benefit of a friend is also defended. Hence is it, that I now render myself grateful, and am studious to justify the bounty of your act ; to which, though your mere authority were satisfying, yet it being an age wherein poetry and the professors of it hear so ill on all sides ; there will a reason be looked for in the subject. It is certain, nor can it with any forehead be opposed, that to much license of poetasters in this time, hath much defomed their mistress ; that every day their manifold and manifest ignorance doth stick unnatural reproaches upon her ; but for their petulancy, it were an act of the greatest injustice, either to let the learned suffer, or so divine a skill (which indeed should not be attempted with unclean hands) to fall under the least contempt For, if men will impartially, and not asquint, look toward the offices and function of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being the good poet, without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good disciplines, inflame

grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master of manners ; and can alone, or with a few, effect the business of mankind : this, I take him, is no subject for pride and ignorance to exercise their railing rhetoric upon. But it will here be hastily answered, that the writers of these days are other things : that not only their manners, but their natures, are inverted, and nothing remaining with them of the dignity of poet. but the abused name, which every scribe usurps : that now, especially in dramatic, or, as they term it, stage-poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all license of offence to God and man is practised. I dare not deny a great part of this, and am sorry I dare not, because in some men's abortive features (and would they had never boasted the light) it is over-true but that all are embarked in this bold adventure for hell, is a most uncharitable thought , and. uttered, a more malicious slander. For my particular, I can, and from a most clear conscience, affirm that I have ever trembled to think toward the least profaneness; have loathed the use of such foul and unwashed bawdry, as is now made the food of the scene : and, howsoever I cannot escape from some, the imputation of sharpness, but that they will say, I have taken a pride, or lust, to be bitter, and not my youngest infant but hath come into the world with all his teeth ; I would ask of these supercilious politics, what nation, society, or general order or state, I have provoked ? What public person ? Whether I have not in all these preserved their dignity, as mine own person, safe ? My works are read, allowed, (I speak of those that are entirely mine), look into them, what broad reproofs have I used ? where have I been particular ? where personal ? except to a mimic, cheater, bawd, or buffoon, creatures, for their insolencies, worthy to be taxed ? yet to which of these so pointingly as he might not either ingenuously have confest, or wisely dissembled his disease ? But it is not rumour can make men guilty, much less entitle me to other men's crimes. I know, that nothing can be so innocently writ or carried, but may be made obnoxious to construction ; marry, whilst I bear mine innocence about me, I fear it not.

Application is now grown a trade with many; and there are that profess to have a key for the decyphearing of every thing: but let wise and noble persons take heed how they be too credulous, or give leave to these invading interpreters to be over-familiar with their fames, who cunningly, and often, utter their own virulent malice, under other men's simplest meanings. As for those that will (by faults which charity hath raked up, common honesty concealed) make themselves a name with the multitude, or, to draw their rude and beastly claps, care not whose living faces they intrench with their petulant styles, may they do it without a rival, for me! I choose rather to live graved in obscurity, than share with them in so preposterous a fame. Nor can I blame the wishes of those severe and wise patriots, who providing the hurts these licentious spirits may do in a state, desire rather to see fools and devils and those antique relics of barbarism retrieved, with all other ridiculous and exploded follies, than behold the wounds of private men, of princes and nations: for, as Horace makes Trebatius speak among these.

"Sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus, et odit." And men may justly impute such rages, if continued, to the writer, as his sports. The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the stage, in all their miscelline interludes, what learned or liberal soul doth not already abhor? where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, so racked metaphors, with brotherly, able to violate the ear of a pagan, and blasphemy, to turn the blood of a Christian to water. I cannot but be serious in a cause of this nature, wherein my fame, and the reputation of divers honest and learned are the question: when a name so full of authority, antiquity, and all great mark, is, through their insolence,

become the lowest scorn of the age ; and those men subject to the petulancy of every vernaculous orator, that were to be the care of kings and happiest monarchs. This it is that hath not only rapt me to present indignation, but made me studious heretofore, and by all my actions, to stand off from them ; which may most appear in this my latest work, which you, most learned Arbitresses, have seen, judged, and to my crown, approved ; wherein I have laboured for their instruction and amendment, to reduce not only the ancient forms but manner of the scene, the easiness, the propriety, the innocence, and last, the doctrine, which is the principal end of poesie, to inform men in the best reason of living. And though my catastrophe may, in the strict rigour of comic law, meet with censure, as turning back to my promise ; I desire the learned and charitable critic, to have so much faith in me, to think it was done of industry : for, with what ease I could have varied it nearer his scale (but that I fear to boast my own faculty) I could hear insert. But my special aim being to put the snaffle in their mouths, that cry out. We never punish vice in our interludes, etc., I look the more liberty ; though not without some lines of example, drawn even in the ancients themselves, the goings out of whose comedies are not always joyful, but oft times the bawds, the servants, the rivals, yes, and the masters are mulcted ; and fitly, it being the office of a comic poet to imitate justice, and instruct to life, as well as purity of language, or stir up gentle affections ; to which I shall take the occasion elsewhere to speak.

For the present, most reverenced Sisters, as I have cared to be thankful for your affections past, and here made the understanding acquainted with some ground of your favours; let me ont despair their continuance, to the maturing of some worthiers fruits ; wherein, if my muses be true to

me, I shall raise the despised head of poetry again, and stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the times have adulterated her from, restore her to her primitive habit, feature, and majesty, and render her worthy to be embraced and kist of all the great and master-spirits out world. As for the vile and slothful, who never affected an act worthy of celebration, or are so inward with their own vicious natures, as they worthily fear her, and think it an high point of policy to keep her in contempt, with their declamatory and windy invectives ; she shall out of just rage incite her servants (who are genus *irritabile*) to spout ink in their faces that shall eat farther than their marrow into their fames' ; and not Cinnamus the barber, with his art, shall be able to take out the brands; but they shall live, and be read, till the wretches die, as things worst deserving of themselves in chief, and then of all mankind.

From my House in the Black-Friars,
this 11th day of February, 1607.

VOLPONE

TEXT WITH
Complete Paraphrase

(*Readers will find Paraphrase opposite to the Text*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

VOLPONE, *a Magnifico.*
MOSCA, *his Parasite.*
VOLTORE, *an Advocate*
CORBACCIO, *an old Gentleman.*
CORVINO, *a Merchant.*
BONARIO, *son to Carbaccio.*
SIR POLITICK WOULD-BE *a Knight.*
PEREGRINE, *a Gentleman Traveller.*
NANO, *a Dwarf.*
CASTRONE, *an Eunuch.*
ANDROGYNO, *an Hermaphrodite.*

GREGR (*or Mob*)
Commandadori, *Officers of Justice.*
Mercatori, *three Merchants.*
Avocatori, *four Magistrates.*
Notario, *the Register.*
LADY WOULD-BE, *Sir Politick's Wife.*
CELIA, *Corvino's Wife.*
Servitori, Servants, *two* Waiting-women, *etc.*

SCENE,—VENICE

THE ARGUMENT

Volpone is wealthy, childless, pretends sickness and also despair. His physical condition raises hopes in the hearts of many, who aspire to inherit his property. Volpone lies pining or withering in his bed. His hanger-on or dependent, receives various presents on his behalf from those aspirants, who are assured of the inheritance and at the same time duped. The parasite or the dependent hatches many plots, which are related and worked out. New plots are hatched, which succeed for a time. Each of the aspirants becomes bold, and each tries to deceive his rival, and finally, all are deceived.

Prologue

Let us hope that we shall be fortunate enough to make our play successful by introducing a little bit of humour, which may suit the taste of the audience. Here are verses which are not nonsensical altogether. We have been asked by the poet (the dramatist) to declare all this. The real aim of the poet or the dramatist has always been, in all his dramas, to mingle instruction with pleasure (entertainment), and not merely to rebuke or criticise the faults of others, as some of the critics, out of jealousy, think and also declare that the dramatist's motive has been always to satirise. These critics think that they can pull down the dramatist by falsely declaring that the dramatist takes one full year to produce one single play. To disprove that wrong notion, this play is the best proof, because this play took the dramatist only five weeks to compose without having any collaborator, any kind of helper in doing the job. The dramatist challenges every other playwright to produce or to improve upon this play even in five generations.

Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted,
Wherewith your rout are so delighted :
Nor hales he in a gull old ends reciting,
To stop gaps in his loose writing,
With such a deal of monstrous and forced action,
As might make Bethlem a faction :
Nor made he his play for jests, stolen from each table,
But makes jests to fit his fable ;
And so presents quick comedy refined,
As best crities have designed,
The laws of time, place, persons he observeth,
From no needful rule he sloerveth,
Alt gall and copperas from his ink he draineth,
Only a little salt remaineth ;
Wherewith he'll rub your cheeks, till red, with laughter,
They shall look fresh a week after.

I can give you some idea of the value of his play by saying that it contains no vulgar joke or force like throwing eggs or custard pudding, which generally entertain the vulgar audience ; nor does it contain any foolish verses from older plays in order to make a patchwork of a play ; nor does it contain any artificial behaviour of any character in it that would surpass even the madness of the lunatics in the hospital of Bethlem : nor has the dramatist in this play borrowed jokes from other writers in order to make his own play entertaining to the audience ; but on the other hand, he offers his bright jolly comedy to his audience with the due approval of his critics and in strict accordance with the rules (of the classical drama) such as the unities of Time, Place and Action. He does not have in his play any unpleasant element such as satire, irony or farce ; but then, this play contains just so much of salt or humour, which, if the audience can properly assimilate, will not only make them laugh, but also help them to maintain a cheerful spirit long after they have attended the performance of the play.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A Room in* VOLPONE'S *House.*

Enter VOLPONE *and* MOSCA

Volp. Good morning to the day, and next, my gold !—
Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.

[*Mosca withdraws the curtain, and discovers piles of gold, plate, jewels, etc.*]

Hail the world's soul, and mine ! More glad then is
The teeming earth to see the long'd-for sun
Peep through the horns of the celestial Ram,
Am I, to view thy splendour darkening his ;
That lying here, amongst my other hoards,
Shew'st like a flame by night, or like the day
Struck out of chaor, when all darkness fled
Unto the centre. O'thou son of Sol,
But brighter than thy father, let me kiss,
With adoration, thee, and every relick
Of sacred treasure, in this blessed room.
Well did wise poets, by thy glorious name,
Title that age which they would have the best ;
Thou being the best of things, and far transcending
All style of joy, in children, parents, friends,
Or any other waking dream on earth :
Thy looks when they to Venus did ascribe,
They should have given her twenty thousand Cupids ;
Such are thy beauties and our loves ! Dear saint,
Riches, the dumb god, that giv'st all men tongues,
That canst do nought, and yet mak'st men do all things,
The price of souls ; even hell, with thee too boot,
Is made worth heaven. Thou art virtue, fame,
Honour, and all things, else. Who can get thee,
He shall be noble valiant, honest, wise—

VOLPONE THE FOXE

ACT I.

Scene I—*A Room in* Volpone's *House*

Enter **Volpone** *and* **Mosca.**

Volpone. I greet the morning, and next, I greet my gold (wealth). Just open the doors of the temple of the goddess of gold so that I may have a look at the goddess. (**Mosca** *withdraws the curtain, and discovers piles of gold, plate, jewels etc.*)

I welcome gold, which is the very life-breath of mine and of all others in the world. I am more pleased at heart to see your brightness so eclipsing the glory of the sun, which the productive earth yearns to see as the sun passes through the zodiac during the spring season. While I am lying in my sick-bed I can see how your brightness shines like the flame of fire or like the sun which comes out of darkness removing all darkness into the centre of the universe. You (gold) are the son of the sun-god, and yet you are brighter than the sun. With due reverence let me touch you with my lips and every other precious thing made of gold. Rightly, the wise poets named the best of their times as the golden age i.e., after your name. You are the best of all things in the world, and you can give us far better pleasure than children, parents or friends (domestic and social relations) can give, or any other dream of ambition in human life can inspire. When the poets described the appearance of Venus as golden, she should have given birth to several thousands of Cupids or gods of love; that is, several thousands of people should have been fascinated by your physical charms. Dear goddess, although you are a silent goddess and you are incapable of doing anything yourself yet with you· help people can recover their lost power of speech and do many other things. You are the very life-breath of mortals (human beings); even hell becomes a pleasant place when one is in your company(when one possesses gold). We can earn virtue, fame, honour and everything else with your help. Whoever can possess you can be known as courage-ous, honest, intelligent, and noble in character.

Mos. And what he will, sir. Riches are in fortune
A greater good, than wisdom is in nature.

Volp. True, my beloved Mosca. Yet, I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Than in the glad possession, since I gain
No common way; I use on trade, no venture;
I wound no earth with plough-shares, fat no beasts,
To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
Oil, corn, or men, to grind them into powder:
I blow no subtle glass, expose no ships
To threat'nings of the furrow-faced sea;
I turn no monies in the public bank,

Nor usure private.

Mos. No, sir, nor devour

Soft prodigals. You shall have some will swallow
A melting heir as glibly as your Dutch
Will pills of butter, and ne'er purge for it;
Tear forth the father of poor families
Out of their beds, and coffin them alive
In some kind clasping prison, where their bones
May be forth-coming, when the flesh is rotten:
But your sweet nature doth abhor these courses;
You loathe, the widows' or the orphan's tears
Should wash your pavements; or their piteous cries
Ring in yous roofs, and beat the air for vengeance.

Volp. Right, Mosca; I do loathe it.

Mos. Sir, man can have his own way if he possesses gold. So far human fortune is concerned, gold is a greater blessing than wisdom.

Volp. You are right, my dear Mosca. But I take pride in the clever way of colecting it rather than in merely possessing it, because I do not use wealth in the same manner as other people do. I do not take to any kind of business with money or invest money in business speculations, nor do. I believe in earning money by cultivating lands or by agriculture. I do not rear or fatten cattle in order to earn money by selling them afterwards to the butchers (or the slaughter house). I do not like to have any mill or workshop or factory in order to exploit human labour and earn money by producing or manufacturing certain commodities as oil, corn or iron tools or machines. I do not manufacture any glass articles or wares, nor do I send out ships into the sea risking my merchandise to the storm and the waves. I do not deposit my wealth in the bank or lend my monay to private persons in order to earn interests on my loans.

Mos. No, sir, you do not try to lend your money to the extravagant persons in order to make them your victims. You can grab all the property of an owner of lands just as easily as the Dutch people swallow butter, and yet you will not have to pay any penalty just as the Dutch people never have diarrhoea for eating much of butter. You can also earn money by putting into the prison the heads of the poor families, by forcing them to pay heavy rents, and by reducing them to skeletons and burying them alive in the prison-house. But then, due to your softness of heart you will not like any of these ways of earning money. You hate to see either the windows or the orphans weeping; you do not like that their tears should drench the staircase of your house or that their pathetic cries should resound the roofs of your buildings and bring down the wrath of Heaven upon your head.

Volp. You are quite correct, Mosca; I really hate all these ways of earning money.

Mos. And besides, sir.
You are not like the thresher that doth stand
With a huge flail, watching a heap of corn,
And, hungry, dares not taste the smallest grain,
But feeds on mallows, and such bitter herbs ;
Nor like the merchants, who hath fill'd his vaults
With Romagnia, and rice Candian wines,
Yet drinks the less of Lombard's vinegar ;
You will lie not in straw, whilst moths and worms
Feed on your sumptuous hangings and soft beds ;
You know the use of riches, and dare give, now
From that bright heap, to me, your poor observer,
Or to your dwarf, or your hermaphrodite,
Your eunuch, or what other household trifle
Your pleasure allows maintenance—
Volp. Hold thee, Mosca, [*Gives him money*].
Take of my hand ; thou strik'st on truth in all,
And they are envious term thee parasite.
Call forth my dwarf, my eunuch, and my fool,
And let them make me sport, [*Exit Mos.*] What should I do,
But cocker up my genius, and live free
To all delights my fortune calls me to ?
I have no wife, no parent, child, ally,
To give my substance to ; but whom I make
Must be my heir : and this makes men observe me :
This draws new clients daily to my house,
Women and men of every sex and age,
That bring me presents, send me plate, coin, jewels,
With hope, that when I die (which they expect
Each greedy minute) it shall then return
Ten-fold upon them ; whilst some, covetous
Above the rest, seek to engross me whole,
And counter-work the one unto the other,
Contend in gifts, as they would seem in love ;
All which I suffer, playing with their hopes,
And am content to coin them into profit,
And look upon their kindness, and take more,
And look on that ; still bearing them in hand,
Letting the cherry knock against their lips,
And draw it by their mouths, and back again—
How now !

Mos. Then again, Sir, you are surely not like the thresher (one who separates the corn from the husk), who, in spite of being hungry, cannot taste even one particle of the corn but who has to feed on flower-plants and other such unpleasant things. You are not even like that merchant, who possesses large quantities of the richest wines in his cellar but who does not taste any of those wines. You will surely not lie on a bed of straw and allow the insects and the flies spoil the rich curtains and also your luxurious bed. You know the proper use of wealth, and that is why, you would surely give, out of that heap of gold, plates and other precious things, something to me or to the dwarf or to the eunuch or to any other servant or dependent in your house.

Volp. Take this, Mosca, (Gives him money) from my hand. You always speak out the right thing, and that is why, I say that those who call you a parasite (one who thrives at the expense of others) are jealous of you *i.e.* malicious to you. You better send for my dwarf, my eunuch and my fool; I want them to entertain me. (*Exit Mosca*). What should I do except giving full play to my hankering for pleasure in order to enjoy my life in all ways, which money can help? I have no wife, no child, no father or mother, no friend to whom I can give away my wealth or property. Hence, whomever I shall choose as my successor he shall inherit all my wealth: It is for the temptation of my wealth that people take care of me, and that many men, women both young and old come to me and present me various precious things such as plates, jewels and coins so that I may be pleased to choose any of them as my heir after my death, and that he or she may inherit my wealth, which is worth ten times more than the articles they present to me. Some of these persons try to monopolise me, and hence, play tricks and contend with one other in offering me all sorts of precious gifts, just as lovers do, in order to win the favour of their beloved. I allow them to do all this, holding up false hopes, by being kind and polite to them, and by tempting them further to present me more precious articles by which I grow richer and feel more pleased at heart by looking on the collected treasure. I tantalise them by holding, as it were, the cherry before their lips only to withdraw it from their mouth.

Scene II—*Re-enter* **Mosca** *with* **Nano, Androgyno,** *and* **Castrone.**

Nan. *Now, room for fresh gamesters, who do will you to know,*
They do bring you neither play nor university show ;
And therefore do entreat you, that whatsoever they rehearse,
May not fare a whit the worse, for the false pace of the verse.
If you wonder at this, you will wonder more ere we pass.
For know, here is inclosed the soul of Pythagoras,
That juggler divine, as hereafter shall follow ;
Which soul fast, and loose, sir came first from Apollo,
And was breath'd into Aethalides, Mercurius his son,
Where it had the gift to remember all that ever was done.
From thence it fled forth, and made quick transmigration
To goldy-lock'd Euphorbus, who was killed, in good fashion,
At the siege of old Troy, by the cuckold of Sparta.
Hermotimus was next (I find it in my charta)
To whom it did pass, where no sooner it was missing
But with one Pyrrhus of Delos it learn'd to go a fishing ;
And thence did it enter the sophist of Greece.
From Pythagore, she went into a beautiful piece,
Hight Aspasia, the meretrix ; and the next toss of her
Was again, of a whore, she became a philosopher,
Crates the cynick ; as it self doth relate it :
Since kings, knights, and beggars, knaves, lords, and, fools gat it,
Besides ox, and ass, camel, mule, goat, and brock.

Scene II. Mosca, Nano, Androgyno, Castrone, Volpone.

Nan. Now, let the players be admitted so that you may come to know them. They will not show you any play or masque as it is shown in the universities on certain ceremonial occasions ; so, we would request you to consider that whatever they will perform and however defective the verses may be, will not be in the least inferior to what is performed in the universities If you wonder at this show, you will have to wonder more before we conclude our performance, because here is a player in whom is locked up the soul of Pythagoras, who was a great magician, because he could pass the human soul from one body to another (Pythagoras believed in the transmigration of the human soul), as it will be seen soon. The soul of Pythagoras came first from Apollo, the sun god, and was then transferred to the body of Aethalides, son of Mercurius, in whom the soul had the power of remembering all about its previous births (lives); and from there it got into the body of Euphorbus, the Phygian, who had golden locks of hair on his head and who was killed in a fitting manner in the Trojan War by Menelaus, whose wife, Helen, ran away with Paris (or who had a faithless wife). Then the soul passed into the body of Hermotimus (that is, what is mentioned in the chart or Lucian's *Dream*) ; then, it passed on to Pyrrhus of Delos, the fisherman ; next it entered the body of Pythagora, the sophist of Greece, from whose body it again passed on to the beautiful frame of Aspasia, who was a harlot and from whose body it migrated again into the body ot a philosopher, named, Crates, the cynic. The soul relates its own story of this long journey of transmigration how it passed through the bodeis of kings, soldiers, beggars, wicked persons, lords and fools, and also through various animals such as ox, ass, camel, mule, goat and badger, in all of which bodies. the soul relates its story like the cock telling its story to its master, the cobbler (whose name was Mycillus). But I have not appeared before you to relate all this, to explain the terms of numbers or the formula of tetractys or the diagram by which he used to swear and recognise each other in foreign lands, or his music, or theorem, or his thigh, which was golden when he attended the Olympic games, or his explanations of the mystery of the changing of the various elements into various bodies. I would, on the other hand,

In all which it hath spoke, as in the cobler's cock.
But I come not here to discourse of that matter,
Or his one, two, or three, or his great oath, By quater,
His musics, his trigon, his golden thigh,
Or his telling how elements shift, but I
Would ask, how of late, thou hast suffered translation,
And shifted thy coat, in these days of reformation,

And. *Like one of the reformed, a fool, as you see,*
Counting all old doctrine heresie.

Nan. *But not on thine own forbid meats hast thou ventured?*

And. *On fish, when first, a Certhusian I enter'd.*

Nan. *Why, then thy dogmatical silence hath left thee?*

And. *Of that an obstreperous lawyer bereft me.*

Nan. *O wonderful change! when sir lawyer forsook thee,*
For Pythagore's sake, what body then took thee?

And. *A good dull mule.* Nan. *And how! by what means*
Thou wert brought to allow of the eating of beans?

And. *Yes.*

Nan. *But from the mule, into whom didst thou pass?*

And. *Into a very strange beast, by some writers call'd an ass;*
By others, a precise, pure, illuminate brother,
Of those devour flesh, and sometimes one another:
And will drop you forth a libel, or a sanctified lie,
Betwixt every spoonful of a nativity-pie?

Nan. *Now quit thee, for heaven, of that profane nation,*
And gently report thy next transmigration.

And. *To the same that I am.*

Nan. *A creature of delight,*
And (what is more than a fool), an hermaphrodite?
Now, prithee, sweet soul, in all thy variation,
Which body would'st thou choose, to keep up thy station?

And. *Troth, this I am in: even here would I tarry.*

ask you how recently you suffered a change particularly in your views about transmigration of the soul in these days of rationalism or reformation brought about by Martin Luther

And. Like a fool of the Reformation who regard all old doctrines or principles as nonsensical, or as irreligious.

Nan. But, I am sure, you have not changed your views about meat eating (Pythagoras was against meat or fish eating because he believed that the human soul might be in the bodies of animals or fishes or even of vegetables).

And. No, I did not change my views about fish eating when first I entered the body of a follower of St. Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian religious sect.

Nan. But how did you come to break your vow of silence which was enjoined by Pythagoras upon his disciples ?

And A noisy lawyer made me break my vow of silence.

Nan. It is a wonderful change indeed. But when did the lawyer leave your company ? For the sake of Pythagoras, please tell me which body next you entered.

And. A good but stupid mule.

Nan. But how did you enter a mule's body ? And how did you take to eating beans ?

And. Yes, I did enter a mule's body and also took to eating beans

Nan. But from the mule into whose body did you enter ?

And. Into a very peculiar animal, which is called an ass by certain writers, while by others it is called a kindred of those animals (Puritans) who were great eaters of meat, and who also ran at the throats of one another, and who, on top of all used to utter defamatory and unholy lies at every step while eating Christmas pudding.

Nan. Now drop the talk of that unholy sect (Puritans), and tell me about your next change (transmigration into some other body).

And. My next change was just as you find me now (a hermaphrodite).

Nan. A hermaphrodite is a much better creature than a fool. Now please tell me, my pretty soul, in all your changes of the bodily form which particular form you would like most to retain.

And. I would prefer the form in which I am at present, (the form of a hermaphrodite).

Nan. *Cause here the delight of each sex thou canst vary?*
And. *Alas, those pleasures be stale, and forsaken;*
No, 'tis your fool, wherewith I am so taken,
The only one creature, that I can call blessed;
For all other forms I have proved most distressed.
Nan. *Spoke true, as thou wert in Pythagoras still.*
This learned opinion we celebrate will,
Fellow eunuch, as behoves us, with all our wit and art,
To dignify that whereof ourselves are so great and special a part.
Volp. Now very, very pretty! Mosca, this was thy invention?
Mos. If it please my patron.
Not else.
Volp. It doth, good Mosca.
Mos. Then it was, sir.

NANO *and* CASTRONE *sing.*

Fools, they are the only nation
Worth men's envy, or admiration:
Free from care, or sorrow-taking,
Selves and others merry making:
All they speak or do is sterling;
Your fool, he is your great man's darling,
And your ladies' sport and pleasure;
Tongue, and bauble are his treasure.
E'en his face begetteth laughter,
And he speaks truth free from slaughter;
He's the grace of every feast,
And sometimes the chiefest guest;
Hath his trencher and his stool,
When wit waits upon the fool.
O, who would not be
He, he, he? [*Knowing without.*

Nan. Because in this form you can enjoy the pleasures of both the sexes ?

And. But it is a pity that such pleasures have grown old and hackneyed. No, I have been so much charmed by the form of the fool that all other forms appear to be unsuitable in my eyes (i. e. the fool is the most blessed creature on earth).

Nan. You are speaking truly indeed as if you were still in the body of Pythagoras, the philosopher. Dear comrade eunuch, we shall give publicity to your wise opinion in this matter, as best as we can, with our gifts of humour and intelligence to dignify the position of the fool in order to glorify our position.

Volp. It is a very entertaining show which you have organised.

Mos. I have done this only to please my master, and not with any other motive.

Volp. It pleases me, good Mosca.

Mos. Then, it was a good show indeed.

Nano *and* Castrone *sing*.

Fools are the only creatures whom all people envy and admire, because they are free from cares and anxieties and because they lend joy to others and thereby make them forget their woes or misfortunes. Whatever the fool speaks is something most precious. The fool is the favourite of the men of high ranks and he is also the source of great fun and pleasure to respect able women. Nonsensical words are the best resource of a fool. His very appearance excites laughter. He is privileged to speak any truth without any fear of punishment. His very presence adorns every dinner party ; he gets the best food and the best seat, and the wisest persons for his listeners. Who would not like to be a fool? [*Knocking without.*

Volp. Who's that? Away! [*Exeunt Nano and Castrone.*]
Look Mosca. Fool, begone! [*Exit Androgyno.*]
Mos. 'Tis Signior *Voltore*, the Advocate;
I know him, by his knock.
Volp. Fetch me my gown,
(My furs and night-caps); say, my couch is changing,
And let him entertain himself, awhile
Without i' the gallery. [*Exit Mcsca.*] Now, now, my clients
Begin their visitation! Vulture, kite,
Raven, and gorcrow, all my birds of prey,
That think me turning carcase, now they come;
I am not for them yet—

Re-enter Mosca *with the gown, etc.*

How now? the news?
Mos. A piece of plate, sir.
Volp. Of what bigness?
Mos. Huge,
Massy, and antique, with your name inscribed.
And arms engraven.
Volp. Good! and not a fox?
Stretch'd on the earth, with fine delusive sleights,
Mocking a gaping crow? ha, Mosca!
Mos. Sharp, sir.
Volp. Give me my furs. [*Puts on his sick dress.*] Why dost thou laugh so, man?
Mos. I cannot choose, sir, when I apprehend
What thoughts he has without now, as he walks:
That this might be the last gift, he should give;
That this would fetch you; if you died to day,
And gave him all, what he should be to-morrow;
What large return would come of all his ventures;
How he should worship'd be, and reverenced;
Ride with his furs, and foot-cloths; waited on
By herds of fools, and clients; have clear way
Made for his mule, as letter'd as himself;
Be call'd the great and learned advocate:
And then concludes, there's nought impossible.

Volp. Who is knocking there ? Get away from here (*Exeunt* **Nano** *and* **Castrone**). See, Mosca. Fool, get away from here. (*Exit* **Androgyno**).

Mos. It is Mr. Voltore, the lawyer. I can recognise him by his knocks at the door.

Volp. Get me my gown, my furs and my night-cap. In the meanwhile, let me change my seat for a bed (in which I will lie like a sick man) Let Mr. Voltore wait for some time outside the gallery. *(Exit* **Mosca**). Now, the aspirants for my fortune have started pouring in—all sorts of creatures, such as vulture, kite raven, carrion crow, all of whom are birds which live upon other birds or feed on flesh. They think that I am in my death-bed ; but I am still not dead.

Re-enter **Mosca** *with the gown etc.*

What is the message, Mosca ?

Mos. A tray has been presented to you, Sir.

Volp. How big is that ?

Mos. A big tray, heavy, and of excellent pattern, on which your name and heraldic bearings have been engraved.

Volp. Do you mean to say that in the tray no portrait of a fox lying on earth staring at some crow perching on a tree with its beak wide open has been painted skilfully ?

Mos. Quick, Sir ;

Volp. Let me have my furs (puts on his sick dress); why are you laughing like that, Mosca ?

Mos. I cannot help laughing when I think what Mr. Voltore must be thinking while he is waiting outside, how he wishes that this should be the last gift to you from him (i. e , you should die immediately), how he would be a different person (i. e. a wealthy man) tomorrow if you died today, what a great reward will come out of all he has presented to you so far, how he will be held in esteem, how he will have furs and foot-cloths (saddle cloths), while riding a horse or a coach, how many foolish persons will attend him and seek his favour ; how people will make way for his mule, who is as educated as himself, when he will be riding the mule ; how he will be called a great learned lawyer, and then ; how nothing will be impossible for him to achieve.

Volp. Yes, to be learned, Mosca.
Mos. O, no: rich
Implies it. Hood an ass with reverend purple,
So you can hide his two ambitious eares,
And he shall pass for a cathedral doctor.
Volp. My caps, my caps, good Mosca. Fetch him in.
Mos. Stay, sir; your ointment for your eyes.
Volp. That's true;
Dispatch, dispatch: I long to have possession
Of my new present.
Mos. That, and thousands more,
I hope to see you lord of.
Volp. Thanks, kind Mosca.
Mos. And that, when I am lost in blended dust,
And hundred such as I am, in succession—
Volp. Nay, that were too much, Mosca.
Mos. You shall live,
Still, to delude these harpies.
Volp. Loving Mosca!
'Tis well: my pillow now, and let him enter.
[*Exit Mosca.*
Now, my feign'd cough my phthisic, and my gout,
My apoplexy, palsy, and catarrhs,
Help, with your forced functions, this my posture,
Wherein, this three year, I have milk'd their hopes.
He comes; I hear him—Uh! [*coughing.*] uh! uh! uh! O—

Scene III

Re-enter Mosca—*introducing* Voltore, *with a piece of Plate.*

Mos. You still are what you were, sir only you.
Of all the rest, are he commends his love,
And you do wisely to preserve it thus,
With early visitation, and kind notes
Of your good meaning to him which, I know,
Cannot but come most grateful. Patron! sir!
Here's Signior Voltore is come—

Volp. Yes, Mosca, he aspires to be learned.

Mos. No, he aspires to be rich. If you cover the two long ears of an ass with some purple hood of the cardinal, he can be easily taken for a cardinal.

Volp. You are right. Get me my caps, Mosca ; and call in Mr. Voltore.

Mos Please wait for a moment. I should first get the ointment for your eyes.

Volp. You are right. Go, go ; and bring in Mr. Voltore ; I want to take possession of the new thing, which has been presented to me. (a plate).

Mos. I want to see you in possession not only of that present (plate) but of very more things.

Volp. Thank you for your good wishes, Mosca.

Mos. I wish further that when I shall be dead, one hundred more persons like me would be also dead in your service in collecting presents like these from various aspirants (*i.e.* you will live the longest life and go on receiving presents from various clients).

Volp. No, Mosca, I do not wish that.

Mos. You will live always (be immortal) to deceive these greedy persons (who want to inherit your wealth).

Volp. It is all right. Let me have my pillow, and let Mr. Voltore come in. [*Exit.*

May all my pretended illnesses such as cough, consumption, rheumatism, high blood pressure, paralysis, and pneumonia help me in maintaining a look of sickness in my bed by which I have been exploiting for the last three years the various aspirants for inheriting my fortune. He is coming ; I hear his foot-steps-Uh ; (coughing uh : uh : uh : O—

Scene III.

Re-enter **Mosca**--*introducing* **Voltore**, *with a piece of Plate.*

Mos. In the list of the candidates, who are candidates for the inheritance of my master's wealth, your position is as favourable now as it was before. Of all other candidates, you command my master's love, and you are prudent enough to maintain this position by offering him presents which make him much obliged to you. Master, Sir, here is Mr. Voltore—

Volp. [*faintly.*] What say you ?
Mos. Sir, Signior Voltore is come, this morning
To visit you.
Volp. I thank him.
Mos. And hath brought
A piece of antique plate, brought of St. Mark,
With which he here presents you.
Volp. He is welcome.
Pray him to come often.
Mos. Yes.
Volt. What says he ?
Mos. He thanks you, and desires you see him often.
Volp. Mosca,
Mos. My patron !
Volp. Bring him near, where is he ?
I long to feel his hand.
Mos. The plate is here, sir.
Volt. How fare you, sir ?
Volp. I thank you, Signior Voltore ;
Where is the plate ? mine eyes are bad.
Volt. [*putting it into his hands.*] I'm sorry,
To see you still thus weak. [*Aside.*
Mos. That he's not weaker.
Volp. You are too munificent,
Volt. No, sir ; would to heaven.
I could as well give health to you, as that plate !
Volp. You give, sir, what you can :
I thank you. Your love.
Hath taste in this, and shall not be unanswer'd :
I pray you see me often.
Volt. Yes, I shall, sir.
Volp. Be not far from me.
Mos. Do you observe that, sir ?
Volp. Hearken unto me, still ; it will concern you.
Mos. You are a happy man, sir ; know your good.
Volp. I cannot now last long—
Mos. You are his heir, sir.
Volt. Am I ?

Volp. (Faintly). What do you say ?

Mos. Sir, Mr. Voltore has come to look you up.

Volp. Please tell him that I am obliged by his visit.

Mos. He has brought one ancient tray which he purchased from the mart of Venice and which he is presenting to you.

Volp. I extend my welcome to him. Please tell him that he should visit me more often in future.

Mos. Yes, I shall tell him.

Volt. What does he say ?

Mos. He expresses his gratefulness to you for your visit, and he wishes that you should visit him more frequently.

Volp. Mosca.

Mos. Here I am, master.

Volp. Bring him (Voltore) closer to me ; but where is he ? I wish to touch his hand.

Mos. The tray is here, Sir.

Volt. How are you feeling now ?

Volp. I am much obliged to you, Mr. Voltore. Let me have a look at the tray ; my eyes are weak.

Volt. (Putting it into his hands). I am sorry to find you still so weak.

Mos. He is sorry that he is not weak (*Aside*).

Volp. You are too generous.

Volt. No, Sir : pray to God that I might be able to give you good health just as I have given you the plate.

Volp. You can give me whatever you like for which I shall be always obliged. That you love me is proved by your gift of the plate ; and I can assure you that your gift will not go unrewarded. I would request you to visit me often.

Volt Yes, I shall visit you often.

Volp. Do not be far away from me.

Mos. Do you notice what he says ?

Volp. Listen to me always ; it will be for your good.

Mos. You are a fortunate man, Sir ; don't miss your fortune.

Volp. I cannot now live long.

Mos. You are his successor, Sir.

Volt. Am I really his successor ?

Volp. I feel me going ; Uh ! uh ! uh ! uh !
I'm sailing to my port, Uh ! uh ! uh ! uh !
And I am glad I am so near my haven.

Mos. Alas, kind gentleman ! Well, we must all go—

Volt. But, Mosca—

Mos. Age will conquer,

Volt. 'Pray thee, hear me :
Am I inscribed his heir for certain ?

Mos. Are you !
I beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe
To write me in your family. All my my hopes
Depend upon your worship : I am lost,
Except the rising sun do shine on me.

Volt, It shall both shine, and warm thee, Mosca.

Mos. Sir,
I am a man, that hath not done your love
All the w‹rst offices : here I wear your keys,
See all your coffers and your caskets lock'd,
Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,
Your plate, and monies ; am your steward, sir,
Husband your goods here.

Volt But am I sole heir ?

Mos. Without a partner, sir ; confirm'd this morning :
The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry
Upon the parchment.

Volt. Happy happy, me !
By what good chance, sweet Mosca ?

Mos. Your desert, sir ;
I know no second cause.

Volt. Thy modesty.
Is not to know it ; well we shall requite it.

Volp. I am feeling as if I am dying. Uh, uh. uh, uh, I am going to the other woıld, Uh. uh, uh, uh, I am pleased to find myself so near my end (death).

Mos It is sad that my master should die. You are a generous gentleman. Well, all of us will have to die some day or other

Volt. But, Mosca—

Mos. As he is sold, he is sure to die soon.

Volt. Please listen to me. Have I been really selected as his successor ?

Mos Positively. Sir. I entreat you that you may kindly include me as one of yous family servants. All my future would now depend upon you. I shall be ruined if the rising sun (i. e., you Mr Voltore) is not favourable to me.

Volt. The rising sun will not only be favourable but also will make you happy.

Mos. Sir I am a person who have not done any bad turn (services) to you. Here I am possessing the keys of the safe that holds all the jewels and other precious things which will belong to you ; I am keeping a list of the precious articles. coins, jewels and plates ; I am the custodian of your wealth and property, and I shall manage all your fortunes most economically.

Volt. But shall I be the only successor ?

Mos. Yes. Sir, you will be the sole successor without anybody else to share your fortuue. The succession deed has been duly signed on a piece of parchment paper, and a seal has been put upon it ; the ink is not yet dry and the wax of the seal is not yet cold.

Volt. How blessed I am indeed ! But how could I be so fortunate, dear Mosca ?

Mos. It is simply because of your merits ; I am not aware of any other reason (for your appointment as the sole successor to my master's fortune).

Volt. It is due to your modesty you are not acknowledging what vital part you must have taken in drafting the will of your master in my favour. Anyhow, your service will be amply rewarded by me.

Mos. He ever liked your course, sir; that first took him,
I oft have heard him say, how he admired.
Men of your large profession, that could speak.
To every cause, and things mere contraries,
Till they were hoarse again, yet all be law;
That, with most quick agility, could turn,
And [re] return; [could] make knots, and undo them;
Give forked counsel; take provoking gold
On either hand, and put it up: these men.
He knew, would thrive, with their humility.
And for his part, he thought he should be blest
To have his heir of such a suffering spirit,
So wise, so grave, of so perplex'd a tongue.
And loud withal, that would not wag, nor scarce
Lie still, without a fee; when every word
Your worship but lets fall, is a chequin—
[*Knocking without.*
Who's that? one knocek; I would not have you seen, sir.
And yet—pretend you came, and went in haste:
I'll fashion an excuse —— and, gentle sir,
When you do come to swim in golden lard,
Up to the arms in honey, that your chin
Is borne up stiff, with fatness of the flood,
Think on your vassal; but remember me:
I have not been your worst of clients.
Volt. Mosca!—
Mos. When will you have your inventory brought, sir?
Or see a copy of the will?—Anon!—
I'll bring to you, sir. Away, begone,
Put business in' your face. [*Exit Voltore.*
Volp. [*springing up.*] Excellent Mosca!
Come hither, let me kiss thee.
Mos. Keep you still, sir.
Here is Corbaccio.

Mos. He always liked your ways, Sir. He was impressed by you at the first sight. On many occasion I have heard him talking highly of the legal profession, how a lawyer can defend every case speaking for and against it at the same time, how he can speak at the top of his voice until his voice becomes broken. and yet he always talks of law and sticks to the legal point, how quickly he can turn his arguments for and against a particular position. how he can make a case complicated and yet how, at the same time. he can simplify the whole thing, how he can offer contradictory arguments with perfect consistency. and how he can incite the parties to institute law-suits and secure money (fees) from both the parties (*i e*., the defendant and the complainant). My master believed that these lawyers would prosper in their life by virtue of their polite tongue ; and that is why, he for himself hoped that if he could get a lawyer for his successor. he would feel very happy. because in his opinion. a lawyer is a very wise. grave. self-sacrificing personality with a skilful tongue that would not speak a word without some fee, and hence. he believed that every word that would fall from your lips would be some gold coin (i. e.. very precious). [*Knocking without*.

Who is knocking there ? I would not like you to be seen by any visitor ; and yet I would pretend to tell the visitor that you came here and went away in a hurry. I shall invent some excuse for your coming here. But, good Sir. when you will be rolling in wealth. and all sorts of comforts and luxuries. please do not forget your servant, that is, me. Please remember that I have been quite a good pleader of your cause.

Volt. Mosca –

Mos. When would you like to see a list of the precious articles or a copy of the will ? I am coming soon (*spoken to the visitor who is knocking at the door*). I will bring both the copy of the will and also the list of the precious articles. Now go away. and try to put on an appearance as if you came on business. [*Exit Voltore.*

Volp. (Springing up). You have acted so wonderfully that I feel tempted to kiss you.

Mos. Do not move an inch, Sir. Corbaccio is knocking at the door.

Volp. Set the plate away ;
The vulture's gone, and the old raven's come :

Scene IV.

Mosca, Volpone, Corbaccio.

Mos. Betake you to your silence, and your sleep.
Stand there, and multiply. [*Putting the plate to the rest.*]
Now, shall we see.
A wretch who is indeed more impotent
Than this can feign to be ; yet hopes to hop
Over his grave—

Enter **Corbaccio !**

Signior Corbaccio !
You're very welcome, sir.
Corb. How does your patron ?
Mos. Troth, as he did, sir ; no amends.
Corb. What ! mends he ?
Mos. No, sir, he's rather worse.
Corb. That's well. Where is he ?
Mos. Upon his couch, sir, newly fall'n asleep.
Corb. Does he sleep well ?
Mos. No wink, sir, all this night.
Nor yesterday ; but slumbers.
Corb. Good he should take
Some counsel of plysicians : I have brought him
An opiate here, frcm mine own doctor.
Mos. He will not hear of drugs.
Corb. Why ? I myself.
Stood by while it was made, saw all the ingredients :
And know, it cannot but most gently work :
My life for his, 'tis but to make him sleep.
Volp. Ay, his last sleep, if he would take it. [*Aside.*
Mos. Sir,
He has no faith in physic.
Corb. Say you, say you ?

Volp. Take away the plate from here. Voltore (whose name implies a vulture) has gone away, while Corbaccio (whose name signifies an old crow) has come.

Scene IV

Mosca, Volpone, Corbaccio.

Mos. Please keep quiet and pretend sleep, Let the plate keep standing here and go on adding to its number by bringing more presents from other customers (*putting the plate to the rest*). Now we shall soon meet a miserable creature who is much weaker in body (or more crippled) than this Volpone who pretends to be weak and crippled, and yet who expects to live long enough to inherit Volpone's wealth and property.

Enter **Corbaccio**

Mr. Corbaccio. You are right welcome, Sir.

Corb. How is your master doing at present ?

Mos. Truly speaking, he is just as before, and no better.

Corb. Do you mean to say, he is improving ?

Mos, No, Sir ; he is rather worse than before.

Corb. That's good. But where is he ?

Mos. He is lying in his bed, just now fallen asleep.

Corb. Does he have sound sleep ?

Mos. Not for a moment he sleeps but he falls into drowsiness, he did not have any sleep yesterday.

Corb. That's good. But he should consult some physician. I have brought for him from my physician some drug which induces sleep.

Mos. He cannot tolerate the idea of taking any kind of drug.

Corb. Why not ? The drug was made under my supervision : I saw all the substances with which it was prepared : I am sure, it will have a very mild (harmless) effect. I can offer my life as a guarantee that the drug has been prepared for producing sleep only (and not to kill him).

Volp. (*Aside*). Yet, to produce my last sleep (death) if I am prepared to have such a sleep.

Mos. Sir, he has no faith in drug.

Corb. Do you really say so ?

Mos. He has no faith in physic : he does think
Most of your doctors are the greater danger,
And worse disease, to escape. I often have
Heard him protest, that your physician
Should never be his heir.

Corb. Not I his heir ?

Mos. Not your physician, sir.

Corb. O, no, no, no,
I do not mean it.

Mos. No, sir, nor their fees
He cannot brook : he says, they flay a man,
Before they kill him.

Corb. Right, I do conceive you.

Mos. And then they do it by experiment ;
For which the law not only doth absolve them,
But gives them great reward : and he is loth
To hire his death, so.

Corb. It is true, they kill
With as much licence, as a judge.

Mos. Nay, more ;
For he but kills, sir, where the law condemns,
And these can kill him too.

Corb. Ay, or me ;
Or any man. How does his apoplex ?
Is that strong on him still ?

Mos. Most violent.
His speech is broken, and his eyes are set,
His face drawn longer than 'twas wont—

Corb. How ! how !
Stronger then he was wont ?

Mos. No, sir : his face
Drawn longer than 'twas wont.

Corb. O, Good !

Mos. His mouth.
Is ever gaping, and his eyelids hang.

Corb. Good.

Mos. A freezing numbness stiffens all his joints,
And makes the colour of his flesh like lead.

Mos. He has no faith in any drug. He believes that most of the physicians are more harmful than any of the direases : and hence, it is more difficult to get out of the clutches of a physician than those of a disease. I have heard him saying on many an occasion that he would never like to have a physician for his successor.

Corb. Do you mean me as his successor ?

Mos. No, I mean your physician.

Corb. No, no, I do not mean my physician.

Mos. He cannot even tolerate the physicians taking their fees, because he says that physicians fleece (rob) a man before they actually kill him.

Corb. You are right. I understand you all right.

Mos. Then again, the physicians kill their patients by making experiments with the diseases, the law does not punish them but reward them on this account. My master is not prepared to pay fees to a physician to kill him.

Corb. Yes, the physicians kill their patients with as much impunity (without any penalty) as a judge issues orders for the killing of the criminals.

Mos No, the physician enjoys greater freedom than the judge in killing persons because the judge kills persons according to law, while the physician kills the judge when he is his patient.

Corb. Yes, the physician can kill me or any person. What's about the attack of apoplexy on your master ? Is he still suffering from the attack?

Mos Very badly indeed. His voice is broken, his eyes have gone into their sockets, and his face has become thinner than before.

Corb. How ? How ? Has he grown stronger than before ?

Mos, No, Sir, his face has become thinner than before.

Corb. That's good.

Mos. His mouth is always opening wide, and his eyelids are also drooping.

Corb. That's good.

Mos. All the joints of his limbs have been hardened and also their sensibilities have been deadened due to which the colour of his whole body has become just like the colour of lead.

Corb. 'Tis good.

Mos. His pulse beats slow, and dull.

Corb. Good symptoms, still

Mos. And from his brain—

Corb. I conceive you ; good.

Mos. Flows a cold sweat, with a continual rheum,
Forth the resolved corners of his eyes.

Corb. Is't possible ? Yet I am better, ha !
How does he, with the swimming of his head ?

Mos O, sir, 'tis past the scotomy ; he now
Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort :
You hardly can perceive him, that he breathes.

Corb. Excellent, excellent ! sure I shall outlast him :
This makes me young again, a score of years.

Mos. I was a-coming for you, sir.

Corb. Has he made his will ?
What has he given me ?

Mos. No, sir.

Corb. Nothing ! ha ?

Mos. He has not made his will, sir.

Corb. Oh, oh, oh !
What then did Voltore, the lawyer, here ?

Mos. He smelt a carcasse, sir, when he but heard
My master was about his testament ;
As I did urge him to it for your good—

Corb. He came unto him, did he ? I thought so.

Mos. Yes, and presented him this piece of plate.

Corb. To be his heir ?

Mos. I do not know, sir.

Corb. True :
I know it too.

Mos. By your own scale, sir. [*Aside.*

Corb. Well,
I shall prevent him, yet. See, Mosca, look,
Here, I have brought a bag of bright chequines,
Will quite weigh down his plate.

Corb. That's good.
Mos. His pulse is beating slow and has become weak.
Corb. They are all good symptoms.
Mos. And from his brain—
Corb. I understand you ; it is good.
Mos. A cold perspiration is flowing out of his forehead, while a kind of sticky exudation (secretion) is coming out from the corners of his motionless eyes.

Corb Are you sure ? I am better then he. How is he feeling now the reeling sensation in his head ?

Mos. Sir, it is beyond his sensibility (i. e., he cannot feel it.) He has lost his sensibilities. He has stopped snoring. You can hardly feel that he is breathing.

Corb. Very goed, very good. Surely, I shall live longer than he His condition makes me feel younger by at least twenty years.

Mos. I was going to talk about you.
Corb. Has he prepared his will ? What has he done for me ?
Mos. No, sir.
Corb. He has done nothing for me ?
Mos. He has not prepared his will
Corb. O, I understand now. But what was Voltore doing here ?

Mos. When he heard that my master wanted to make a will, Voltore thought that my master was dead. I asked him to make the will in your favour.

Corb. Did Voltore come to your master ? I thought that he did.

Mos. Yes, he did come and presented my master this tray.
Corb. Did he present the tray in order to be his successor ?
Mos. That I could not tell you, Sir
Corb. You are right. I also know it. (i. e. Voltore presented the plate in order to be Volpone's successor).

Mos. According to your own judgment (just as you want to be Volpone's heir) (*Aside*)

Corb. Well, I shall prevent him from becoming a successor. See, Mosca, I have brought a bagful of gold coins which all definitely be much heavier in price than the plate.

Mos. [*taking the bag*] Yea, marry, sir.
This is true physic, this your sacred medicine ;
No talk of opiates, to this great elixir !
Corb 'Tis aurum palpabile, if not potabile.
Mos It shall be minister'd to him, in his bowl.
Corb. Ay, do, do, do.
Mos. Most blessed cordial !
This will recover him.
Corb. Yes, do, do, do.
Mos. I think it were not best, sir.
Corb. What ?
Mos To recover him.
Corb. O, no. no, no ; by no means.
Mos. Why, sir, this
Will work some strange effect, if he but feel it.
Corb. 'Tis true, therefore forbear, I'll take my venture:
Give me it again.
Mos. At no hand ; pardon me :
You shall not do yourself that wrong, sir. I
Will so advise you, you shall have it all.
Corb. How ?
Mos All, sir ; 'tis your right, your own ; no man
Can claim a part : 'tis yours, without a rival,
Decreed by destiny.
Corb. How, how, good Mosca ?
Mos. I'll tell you, sir. This fit he shall recover.
Corb. I do conceive you.
Mos. And, on first advantage
Of his gain'd sense, will I re-importune him
Unto the making of his testament :
And shew him this. [*Pointing to the money.*]
Corb. Good, good.
Mos 'Tis better yet,
If you will hear, sir.
Corb. Yes, with all my heart.
Mos. Now, would I counsel you, make home with speed ;
There, frame a will ; whereto you shall inscribe
My master your sole heir.

Mos. (taking the bag). Yes surely, sir. This is the real medicine, and not any sleeping-drug which will serve as a great restorer of health of my master.

Corb This is liquid gold although it is not drinkable (like the sleeping-drug).

Mos This medicine (gold coins) will be applied to him in his drinking vessel.

Corb. Yes, do it.

Mos. It is very excellent restorative. This will help him in recovering his health.

Corb. Yes, do apply.

Mos. In my opinion, it would not be the best thing, sir.

Corb What do you mean?

Mos. To restore him to health.

Corb. Surely not.

Mos. Why not, sir? This (bag of gold coins) will have some peculiar effect upon him if he touches it.

Corb It is true; so, do not apply it; I will take back my money. Let me have it back.

Mos. Excuse me, that it shall not be returned to you; I shall not allow you to do any injury to yourself. I will advise you in such a manner that you will have everything (i. e., my master's wealth as well as yours).

Corb. But how?

Mos. You will have everything. Sir, because lawfully it will be all yours; nobody shall be able to get any portion of it; you will have no sharer as it has been ordained by your fate.

Corb. But how would it be possible, my dear Mosca?

Mos. I shall explain to you. He (my master) will recover from this fit of unconsciousness.

Corb. I do understand you.

Mos. As soon as he recovers his consciousness, I will urge him again to make a will; and I will show him this bag of gold coins (presented by you). [*Pointing to the money*].

Corb. Very good.

Mos. It will be better still if you will listen to me, sir.

Corb. Yes, most heartily.

Mos. Now I would advise you to go home immediately, and make a will in which you should mention my master as your sole successor.

Corb. And disinherit
My son !
Mos. O, sir, the better : for that colour
Shall make it much more taking.
Corb. O, but colour ?
Mos. This will, sir, you shall send it unto me.
Now, when I come to inforce, as I will do,
Your cares, your watchings, and your many prayers,
Your more than many gifts, your this day's present,
And last, produce your will ; where, without thought,
Or least regard, unto your proper issue,
A son so brave, and highly meriting,
The stream of your diverted love hath thrown you
Upon my master, and made him your heir :
He cannot be so stupid, or stone dead,
But out of conscience, and mere gratitude—
Corb. He must pronounce me his ?
Mos. 'Tis true.
Corb. This plot.
Did I think on before.
Mos. I do believe it.
Corb. Do you not believe it ?
Mos. Yes, sir.
Corb. Mine own project.
Mos Which, when he hath done, sir—
Corb. Publish'd me his heir ?
Mos. And you so certain to survive him—
Corb. Ay.
Mos. Being so lusty a man—
Corb. 'Tis true.
Mos. Yes, sir—
Corb. I thought on that too. See, how he should be
The very organ, to express my thoughts !
Mos. You have not only done yourself a good—
Corb. But multiplied it on my son.
Mos. 'Tis right, sir.
Corb. Still, my invention.

Corb. And thereby deprive my son of his inheritance.

Mos. It would be better if you did so (disinherited your son). because this will show that you are more attached to my master than to your son.

Corb. What do you really mean ?

Mos You should send your will to me so that after having impressed my master with all your past and present gifts to him and also with the tale of your care, anxiety and prayer on his account. and last of all, with your will in his favour, which will show how you have given away everything of yours to him with total disregard to your love for your welldeserving son, and to his rightful claims upon your property. My master cannot be devoid of common sense or sense of justice so much that he will not consider all these points in your favour in order to make you his sole successor in return.

Corb. Do you mean to say that your master will make me his sole heir in return ?

Mos. You are right.

Corb. I thought of this plot beforehand.

Mos. I do believe that you did.

Corb. Do you not belive my words ?

Mos. Yes, I do, sir.

Corb. It was my plot.

Mos. When he has done it, sir,.........

Corb. Do you mean, when he has declared me as his successor ?

Mos. And you are so sure that you will live longer than he...

Corb. Yes.

Mos. Being so strong and healthy......

Corb. You are right.

Mos. Yes, Sir......

Corb I thought of that also. See how Mosca has expressed my thoughts about the plot.

Mos. You have done service not only to yourself......

Corb. But added to the inheritance of my son.

Mos. You are right, sir.

Corb. Still I must say that the plot is my own invention.

Mos. 'Las, sir! heaven knows,
It hath been all my study, all my care,
(I e'en grow gray withal,) how to work things—
Corb. I do conceive, sweet Mosca.
Mos. You are he,
For whom I labour, here.
Corb Ay, do, do, do:
I'll straight about it. [*Going*
Mos. Rook go with you, raven!
Corb. I know thee honest.
Mos. You do lie, sir! [*Aside.*
Corb. And—
Mos. Your knowledge is no better than your ears, sir.
Corb. I do not doubt, to be a father to thee.
Mos. Nor I to gull my brother of his blessing.
Corb. I may have my youth restored to me, why not?
Mos. Your worship is a precious ass!
Corb. What say'st thou?
Mos. I do desire your worship, to make haste, sir.
Corb. 'Tis done, 'tis done; I go. [*Exit.*
Volp. [*leaping from his couch.*] O, I shall burst!
Lt out my sides, let out my sides—
Mos. Contain.
Your flux of laughter, sir: you know, this hope
Is such a bait, it covers any hook.
Volp. O, but thy working, and thy placing it!
I cannot hold; good rascal, let me kiss thee:
I never knew thee in so rare a humour.
Mos. Alas, sir, I but do, as I am taught;
Follow your grave instructions; give them words;
Pour oil into their ears, and send them hence.
Volp. 'Tis true, 'tis true. What a rare punishment.
Is avarice, to itself!
Mos. Ay, with our help, sir.

Mos. God alone knows and it is a pity that you do not know how much labour I have been putting in, how I have grown old by constantly worrying about your welfare (i,e., my Master's will in your favour).

Corb. I fully understand it, my dear Mosca.

Mos. It is only for you that I am working so hard.

Corb Yes, do work hard for me. I will soon make my will in favour of your master. [*Going*.

Mos. May you, raven, be duped.

Corb. I know you to be an honest man.

Mos. You are telling a lie, sir. [*Aside*.

Corb. And.........

Mos You are as dull in your intelligence as you are in your ears.

Corb. I am sure I am as good as your father in age.

Mos. Nor am I going to rob your son of his inheritance.

Corb Why should I not be able to grow young (in order to inherit Volpone's wealth and property) ?

Mos. Your honour is a rare ass (i.e., a hopeless idiot).

Corb. What do you say ?

Mos. I wish your honour to make haste (in going away).

Corb. I have finished ; I am going. [*Exit*.

Volp. (Leaping from his couch) I am tempted to laugh so much that my sides (sides of the body) will burst open.

Mos. Please control your laughter, sir ; you know that this temptation of inheritance is so irresistible that it will serve as a bait for any purpose.

Volp. How wonderful is your plot, and how cleverly you have hatched it ; I cannot really control my laughter. My sweet secoundrel, I feel tempted to kiss you. I never knew you to be so clever.

Mos. But I am acting just as I have learnt from you ; I am simply following (obeying) your instructions, giving expression to your advice or suggestion, and cheating them (the clients for inheritance) with false temptations.

Volp. You are perfectly right. How lust for wealth is punished by itself.

Mos. Yes, sir, they are punished with our assistance.

Volp. So many cares, so many maladies,
So many fears attending on old age,
Yea, death so often call'd on, as no wish
Can be more frequent with them, their limbs faint,
Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing, going,
All dead before them ; yea, their very teeth,
Their instruments of eating, failing them :
Yet this is reckon'd life ! nay, here was one
Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer !
Feels not his gout, nor palsy ; feigns himself
Younger by scores of years, flatters his age
With confident belying it hopes he may
With charms, like Aeson, have his youth restored :
And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate
Would be as easily cheated on, as he,
And all turns air ! [*Knocking within*]. Who's that there, now ? a third !

Mos. Close, to your couch again ; I hear his voice :
It is Corvino, our spruce merchant.

Volp. [*lies down as before.*] Dead.

Mos. Another bout, sir, with your eyes. [*Anointing them.*]—Who's there ?

Scene V—Mosca, Volpone.

Enter CORVINO

Signior Corvino ! come most wish'd for ! O,
How happy were you, if you knew it, now !

Corv. Why ? what ? wherein ?

Mos. The tardy hour is come, sir.

Corv. He is not dead ?

Mos. Not dead, sir, but as good ;
He knows no man.

Corv. How shall I do, then ?

Mos. Why, sir ?

Corv. I have brought him here a pearl.

Volp. There are so many causes of anxiety, so many physical and mental troubles, so many fears in old age that one frequently wishes to die particularly, when one's senses are very weak, when one can see, one can not hear, and when everything appears to be dead, when even the teeth by which one can eat are altogether missing ;—this is the real state of human life. Here was a person (Corbaccio) who has just now gone home. He wants to live long in spite of his rheumatism and paralysis ; he fancies himself to be twenty years younger than his actual age. He deliberately tries to forget his advanced years by raising false hopes before himself, and like Aeson tries to get back his youth by some magic potion (drug) ; and with such false hopes, he feels so much elated that he ventures to conquer even his adverse fate and believes earnestly that everyone of the disabilities of old age will disappear. (*Knocking within*). Who is knocking at the door? A third candidate for inheritance has arrived.

Mos. Get into your couch again. I am hearing his voice It is the voice of Corvino, the spruce (fir merchant).

Volp. (*lies down as before*) I am dead again (i.e., I am pretending to be dead).

Mos. Another application of ointment to your eyes (Anointing them) Who is there ?

Scene V.

Enter **Corvino**

Mr. Corvino ! You have arrived just when you were awaited. How happy you would be if you knew of it.

Corv. Why should I be happy ? What should I know ? How can I be happy ?

Mos. The hour of the end which was advancing rather slowly has now arrived.

Corv. Do you mean to say that he is not dead ?

Mos. Not yet, sir, but he is now as good as dead ; he cannot recognise any person.

Corv. How shall I then fare ?

Mos. Why, sir ?

Corv. I have brought a pearl for your master.

Mos. Perhaps, he has
So much remembrance left, as to know you, sir:
He still calls on you; nothing but your name
Is in his mouth. Is your pearl orient, sir?
Corv. Venice was never owner of the like.
Volp. [*faintly.*] Signior Corvino!
Mos. Hark.
Volp. Signior Corvino!
Mos. He calls you; step and give it him—He's here, sir,
And he has brought you a rich pearl.
Corv. How do you, sir?
Tell him, it doubles the twelfth caract.
Mos. Sir,
He cannot understand, his hearing's gone;
And yet it comforts him to see you—
Corv. Say,
I have a diamond for him, too.
Mos. Best shew it, sir;
Put into his hand; 'tis only there
He apprehends: he has his feeling, yet.
See, how he grasps it!
Corv. 'Las, good gentleman!
How pitiful the sight is!
Mos. Tut! forget, sir.
The weeping of an heir should still be laughter
Under a visor.
Corv. Why, am I his heir?
Mos. Sir, I am sworn, I may not shew the will
Till he be dead; but here has been Corbraccio,
Here has been Voltore, here were others too,
I cannot number 'em, they were so many;
All gaping here for legacies: but I,
Taking the vantage of his naming you,
Signior Corvino, *Signior Corvino*, took
Paper, and pen, and ink, and there I asked him.
Whom he would have his heir? *Corvino*. Who
Should be executor? *Corvino*. And,
To any question we silent to,
I still interpreted the nodes, he made,

Mos. Perhaps he has still some power of recollection left in him so as to be able to recognise you, Sir. He always utters your name ; you are constantly on his lips. Do you think, the pearl you have brought belongs to any of the eastern countries ?

Corv. Nowhere in Venice you could find such a pearl.

Volp. (*faintly*) Mr. Corvino.

Mos. Listen.

Volp Mr. Corvino.

Mos. He is calling you. You better walk up and present this pearl to him. Mr. Corvino is present here ; he has brought a very precious pearl for you.

Corv. How are you feeling, sir, at this moment ? Tell him that the pearl is twenty-four grains in weight.

Mos. Sir, he cannot follow your words because he has lost his power of hearing ; but then, your very presence (sight) is a consolation to him.

Corv. Tell him that I have got a diamond also for him.

Mos. It would be most proper if you show the diamond (pearl ?) to him and place it in his hand, because he can feel things only by the touch. See how he catches hold of the pearl.

Corv. It is a pity that such a fine gentleman should be in such a sad condition of health. The very sight is pathetic.

Mos. Try to forget it, sir. The tears (sorrows) of a successor should be always smiles under cover (i e. an heir to a person should weep outwardly but smile inwardly to see the person in death-bed. because by his death alone the heir can inehrit the person's wealth and property.

Corv. Do you think, I am going to be his heir ?

Mos I am dead sure. I may not be able to show you the will before his death ; but I can tell you that Corbaccio, Voltore and many others were here, I cannot even count the number—all of whom had been waiting anxiously for the inheritance of my master's property. But I took the opportunity, when he mentioned your name twice or thrice, I asked him whom he would like to have for his successor. I got ink, paper, pen, everything ready. He uttered your name in reply to my question ; and when he could not say anything more due

Through weakness for, consent: and sent home th' others,
Nothing bequeath'd them, but to cry and curse.

Corv. O, my dear Mosca. [*They embrace.*] Does he perceive us ?

Mos. No more then a blind harper. He knows no man,
No face of friend, nor name of any servant,
Who 'twas that fed him last, or gave him drink :
Not those he hath begotten, or brought up,
Can he remember.

Corv. Has he children ?

Mos. Bastards,
Some dozen, or more, that he begot on beggars,
Gipseys, and Jews, aed black-moors, when he was drunk.
Knew you not that, sir ? 'tis the common fable.
The dwarf, the fool, the eunuch, are all his ;
He's the true father of his family,
In all save me :—but he has given them nothing.

Corv. That's well, that's well ! Art sure he does not hear us ?

Mos. Sure, sir ! why, look you, credit your own sense. [*Shouts in Volp's ear.*
The pox approach, and add to your diseases,
If it would send you hence the sooner, sir,
For your incontinence, it hath deserv'd it
Thoroughly, and thoroughly, and the plague to boot !—
You may come near, sir.—Would you once close
Those filthy eyes of yours, that flow with slime,
Like two frog-pits ; and those same hanging cheeks,
Cover'd with hide instead of skin—Nay, help, sir—
That look like frozen dish-clouts set on end !

Corv [*aloud.*] Or like on old smoked wall, on which the rain
Ran down in streaks !

to his bodily weakness, I interpreted his consent in your favour by nods of his head. I then sent away others, because nothing was willed in anybody's favour ; and naturally, everybody cried and cursed my master.

Corv. O my sweet Mosca ! (*They embrace*). Does he not recognise us ?

Mos. No better than a player on the harp who is without his eyes. He does not remember anybody's face either of his friends or of his servants who fed him last, or any of the children whom he has brought into this world.

Corv. Has he got children ?

Mos. All illegitimate children (who cannot legally inherit property)—one dozen or more, all of whom he begot out of beggar women, gypsy women, Jewish women and also of Negro women, particularly when he used to be heavily drunk with wine. But did not you know this, sir ? It is a common story (i. e., everybody knows it). The dwarf, the fool and the eunuch—all are his illegitimate children ; he is the real father of all of them except me ; but he has willed no property in favour of any of them.

Corv. That's good : that's good. Are you sure that he cannot hear our voice ?

Mos. I am sure, sir. You can test it yourself. (Shouts in Volpone's ear). May the plague and many other diseases infect you and thereby send you to the other world sooner. By your licentious ways of living you rightly deserve to be punished by plague and other such foul diseases. You may come nearer, sir—I wish you did close your eyes for ever (i. e., die) from which are coming out all sorts of filthy secretions just like two pits in which the frogs secrete their poisonous liquid. Your cheeks are no longer soft but as hard as the skin of an animal—Come along, sir, you also join in abusing him and see that he cannot hear us at all. Your cheeks look like napkins which are used for washing dishes or plates and which have become stiff due to dirt or filth.

Corv. (aloud) or they (cheeks) are like old discoloured walls on which heavy rains have poured down in torrents (and thereby made furrows or lines).

Mos. Excellent, sir ! speak out :
You may be louder yet ; a culverin,
Discharged in his ear, would hardly bore it.
Corv. His nose is like a common sewer, still running.
Mos. 'Tis good ! And what his mouth ?
Corv. A very draught.
Mos. O, stop it up—
Corv. By no means.
Mos. 'Pray you let me :
Faith, I could stifle him rarely with a pillow,
As well as any woman that should keep him.
Corv. Do as you will ; but I'll begone.
Mos. Be so :
It is your presence makes him last so long.
Corv. I pray you, use no violence.
Mos. No, sir ! why ?
Why should you be thus scrupulous, pray you sir ?
Corv. Nay, at your discretion.
Mos. Well, good sir, begone.
Corv. I will not all trouble him now, to take my pearl.
Mos. Puh ! nor your diamond. What a needless care
Is this afflicts you ? Is not all here yours ?
Am not I here, whom you have made your creature ?
That owe my being to you ?
Corv. Grateful Mosca !
Thou art my friend, my fellow, my companion,
My partner, and shalt share in all my fortunes.
Mos. Excepting one.
Corv. What's that ?
Mos. Your gallant wife, sir,— [*Exit Corv.*
Now is he gone : we had no other means
To shoot him hence, but this.

Mos. Very good, sir. Go on speaking like this. You may speak much louder than this and yet the loud report of a cannon shot will not affect his ear in the least (i. e., he won't be able to hear anything).

Corv. His nose is like an underground pipe which is constantly flowing and carrying all the filth in it.

Mos. It is very good. What does his mouth look like ?

Corv. Like a drain.

Mos. O, stop or close ud the drain—

Corv. I will do it never.

Mos. Let me then stop it (Volpone's mouth). I am sure, I could choke him to death with a pillow as easily as a prostitute could do it.

Corv. You can do whatever you like but I will go away from here.

Mos. Yes, you go away ; it is because of your presence that I cannot choke him to death, and that is why, he is living longer.

Corv. I would entreat you not to be so cruel to him.

Mos. But why not ? Why should you be so hesitating, sir ?

Corv. No, you can do whatever you think fit.

Mos. Well, then better go away.

Corv. I will not then bother him to take the pearl from me.

Mos. You will not bother him even with your diamond, is it so ? Why are you getting anxious for nothing ? Don't you know that all the precious things which are here belong to you, and even I belong to you, because now my verv existence would decend upon you ?

Corv. You are a very grateful creature, Mosca. You are my friend, my companion, my partner, and you will have a portion of all the wealth and property which may belong to me.

Mos. Except one thing.

Corv. What is that thing ?

Mos. Your beautiful wife, sir,... [*Exit* Corvino]

Now he has gone away. We had no other means of getting rid of him except in this manner (i. e., by mentioning his wife's name).

Volp. My divine Mosca !
Thou hast to-day outgone thyself. [*Knocking within.*]—
Who's there ?
I will be troubled with no more. Prepare
Me music, dances, banquets, all del ghts ;
The Turk is not more sensual in his pleasures,
Than will Volpone. [*Exit Mos.*] Let mee see ; a pearl !
A diamond ! plate ! chequines ! Good morning's purchase.
Why, this is better than rob churches, yet ;
Or fat, by eating, once a month, a man –

Re-enter Mosca

Who is't ?
Mos. The beauteous lady Would be, sir,
Wife to the English Knight, Sir Politick Would-be,
(This is the style, Sir, is directed me)
Hath sent to know how you have slept to-night,
And if you would be visited ?
Volp. Not now :
Some three hours, hence—
Mos. I told the squire so much.
Volp. When I am high with mirth and wine; then, then.
'Fore heaven, I wonder at the desperate all over
Of the bold English, that they dare let loose
Their wives to all encounters !
Mos. Sir, this knight
Had not his name for nothing, he is *Politick*.
And knows, howe'er his wife affect strange airs,
She hath not yet the face to be dishonest :
But had she Signior Corvino's wife's face—
Volp Has she so rare a face ?
Mos. O, sir, the wonder,
The blazing star of Italy ! a wench
Of the first year ! a beauty, ripe as harvest !
Whose skin is whiter than a swan all over,
Than silver, snow, or lillies ! a soft lip,
Would tempt you to eternity of kissing !
And flesh that melteth in the touch to blood !
Bright as your gold, and lovely as your gold !
Volp Why had not I known this before ?
Mos. Alas, sir,
Myself but yesterday discover'd it.
Volp. How might I see her ?

Volp. My wonderful Mosca ! Today you have done more than your best. (*Knocking within*) Who is knocking ? I am not prepared to receive any more visitors. Arrange for some music, dances, feasts and all sorts of entertainments A Turk or a member of the Ottoman race is not so much addicted to pleasures as Volpone (*Exit* **Mosca**). Let me have a look at the pearl, the diamond, the gold coins. It is a good collection in one morning. This is the better way of earning wealth than by praying to God or than by eating human flesh like a cannibal (i. e., by exploitation of the poor).

Re-enter **Mosca**

What is that ?

Mos. The beautiful Lady Would-be, sir, wife of the English Knight, Sir Politick Would-be, (This is the manner in which she introduced herself)has sent an inquiry if you had any sound sleep last night and also if you would like to be visited by her.

Volp. Not at present but three hours later.

Mos. I told the messenger like that.

Volp. I shall meet her only when I am drunken and in most cheerful spirits. In the name of God, I am really surprised to note the recklessness of the English people who risk the honour of their wives to all kinds of temptations.

Mos. Sir, this knights name is significant ; his name is Politick i. e., cunning or diplomatic, and he knows quite well that however much his wife may be flirting, nobody is likely to be tempted by her face (which is old and unattractive) But if she possessed the same attractive face as that of Corvino's wife.

Volp. Does Corvino's wife possess such an enchanting face?

Mos. O, sir, she is really the most flaming beauty of Italy, a woman of the first bloom of youth, who is fully blossomed like the ripe corn, whose skin is uniformly whiter than the plumes of a swan or than silver snow or lilies, whose soft lips would tempt one to kiss her for ever, and whose flesh is as bright as gold and melts at the very touch into the very blood of a person who touches her.

Volp. Why did not you tell me earlier ?

Mos. But, sir, I came to know of it only yesterday.

Volp. But how could I have a look at her ?

Mos. O, not possible ;
She's kept as warily, as is your gold ;
Never do's come abroad, never takes air,
But at a window. All her looks are sweet,
As the first grapes, or cherries, and are watch'd
As near, as they are.
Volp. I must see her.
Mos. Sir,
There is a guard of ten spies thick, upon her ;
All his whole household ; each of which is set
Upon his fellow, and have all their charge,
When he goes out. when he comes in, examined.
Volp. I will go see her, though but at her window.
Mos. In some disguise, then.
Volp That is true ; I must.
Maintain mine own shope still the same : we'll think.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

Scene I—St. Mark's Place ; *a retired corner before* Corvino's *House*

Enter **Politic Would-be,** *and* **Peregrine.**

Sir P. Sir, to a wise man, all the world's his soil :
It is not Italy, nor France, nor Europe,
That must bound me, if my fates call me forth.
Yet, I protest, it is no salt desire
Of seeing countries, shifting a religion,
Nor any disaffection to the state
Where I was bred, and unto which I owe
My dearest plots, hath brought me out ; much less,
That idle, antique, stale, gray-headed project
Of knowing men's minds, and manners, with Ulysses !
But a peculiar humour of my wife's,
Laid for this height of Venice, to observe,
To quote, to learn the language, and so forth—
I hope you travel, sir, with licence ?

Mos. O, it is not possible because she is guarded as carefully as you guard your gold or wealth. She never comes out of her house in the open air but always remains at the window of her room or house. All her appearance and ways are extremely attractive just like the youngest grapes or cherries, and they are always kept under the strictest guard.

Volp. I must have a look at her.

Mos. But, sir, there is a ring of detectives who keep a strict watch over her, and each of these detectives closely watches the movements and talks of other detectives so that nobody can betray anybody and so that when Corvino goes out of his house or returns home they are strictly kept in charge of the house and they keep a watch over one another.

Volp. I will have a glance at her when she is at her window.

Mos. You should better first conceal your identity (true or real self).

Volp. You are right in your advice; but then, I must not disfigure my face or body in order to conceal my identity. We will think over or discuss the matter afterwards. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

Scene I. St. Mark's *place* ; *a retired corner before* Corvino's *House.*

Enter **Sir Politick Would-be,** *and* **Peregrine**

Sir P. To an intelligent person the whole world is the object of study or observation, and not merely a part of Italy or France or even of Europe. None of these countries should limit my range of study or observation, if at all I am destined to travel. Yet I must say that I have not come out of my homeland due to my excessive desire for seeing new countries or for changing my religion or for being banished from home due to my disloyalty to the government of my country where I have been bred and brought up, and where I possess some lands, which are dear to me ; nor is it due to any old, hackneyed and meaningless mission to study the thoughts, the ideas and manners of the people of other countries just as Ulysses went out on a world tour in order to study men and manners, climates, councils and governments of various lands. But it is due to the peculiar fancy of my wife for observing, for learning and for quoting the language of Italy that we have come out of our home. I hope, you possess a passport for your travel.

Per. Yes.

Sir P. I dare the safelier converse—How long, sir,
Since you left England ?

Per. Seven weeks.

Sir P. So lately !
You have not been with my lord ambassador ?

Per. Not yet, sir.

Sir P. Pray you, what news, sir, vents our climate ?
I heared last night a most strange thing reported
By some of my lord's followers, and I long
To hear how 'twill be seconded.

Per What was't, sir ?

Sir P. Marry, sir, of a raven that should build
In a ship royal of the king's.

Per. This fellow,
Does he gull me, trow? or is gull'd ? [*Aside*] Your name, sir.

Sir P. My name is Politick Would-be.

Per. O, that speaks him.—[*Aside.*]
A knight, sir ?

Sir P. A poor knight, sir.

Per. Your lady
Lies here in Venice, for intelligence
Of tires, and fashions, and behaviour,
Amomg the curtezans ? the fine Lady Would-be ?

Sir P. Yes, sir ; the spider and the bee, ofttimes,
Such from one flower.

Per. Good sir Politick,
I cry you mercy ; I have heard much of you :
'Tis true, sir, of your raven.

Sir P. On your knowledge ?

Per. Yes, and your lion's whelping in the Tower.

Sir P. Another whelp !

Per. Another, sir.

Sir P. Now heaven !
What prodigies be these ? The fires at Berwick !
And the new star ! these things concurring, strange,
And full of omen ! Saw you those meteors ?

Per. Yes, I do.

Sir P. May I venture to enquire when you came out of England ?

Per. Just seven weeks ago,

Sir P. So recently ? Did you meet the Lord Ambassador of England ?

Per. Not yet, sir.

Sir P Please let me hear some news about our country (England). I came to know a strange news which was reported by the attendan s of th: Ambassador, and which I want to be supported by you (*i.e.*, which I want you to certify).

Per. What was that news, sir ?

Sir P. It was about a raven that has built its nest in the ship of the king.

Per. Does this man want to make a fool of me or of himself ? (*Aside*) May I like to know your name, sir ?

Sir P. My name is Politick Would be.

Per. O, that explains his character (*Aside*). Are you a knight, sir ?

Sir P. An humble knight, sir.

Per. Does your wife Lady Politick Would-be reside in Venice in order to study the dress, the fashions and the manners of the courtesans (respectable prostitute) ?

Sir P. You are right, sir ; both the spider (Lady Politick Would-be) and the bee (the courtesan) collect inframations from the same source.

Per. Well, Sir Politick, please pardon me ; I have heard a lot about you ; what you have heard about the raven is really true.

Sir P. Do you know it (about the raven) personally ?

Per. Yes, sir ; I know also about a lion giving birth to a cub in the Tower (an ancient fortress, palace and prison in London).

Sir P. Do you mean to say, the lion gave birth to another cub ?

Per. Yes, sir, another cub.

Sir P. Good heavens ! What unusual things these are ! The meteors seen at Berwick in Northumberland, the appearance of a new star—all these are unusual things which portend something evil. Did you see that shooting star ?

Per. I did, sir.

Sir P. Fearful! Pray you, sir, confirm me,
Were there three porpoises seen above the bridge,
As they give out?

Per. Six, and a sturgeon, sir.

Sir P. I am astonish'd!

Per. Nay, sir, be not so;
I'll tell you a greater prodigy than these.

Sir P. What should these things portend?

Per. The very day.
(Let me be sure) that I put forth from London,
There was a whale discover'd, in the river,
As high as Woolwich, that had waited there
Few know how many months, for the subversion
Of the Stode fleet.

Sir P. Is't possible? believe it,
'Twas either sent from Spain, or the archdukes:
Spinola's whale, upon my life, my credit!
Will they not leave these projects? Worthy sir,
Some other news.

Per. Faith, Stone the fool is dead,
And they do lack a tavern fool extremely.

Sir P. Is mass Stone dead?

Per. He's dead, sir; why, I hope
You thought him not immortal?—O, this knight,
Were he well known, would be a precious thing
To fit our English stage: he that should write
But such a fellow, should be thought to feign
Extremely, if not maliciously. [*Aside.*

Sir P. Stone dead!

Per. Dead.—Lord! how deeply, sir, you apprehend it?
He was no kinsman to you?

Sir P. That I know of.
Well! that same fellow was an unknown fool.

Per. And yet you knew him, it seems?

Per. Yes, I saw it, sir.

Sir P. Most dangerous indeed ! Please certify that three porpoises (sea-elephants) were discovered upon the London Bridge, as it has been reported by people.

Per. Six porpoises and one sturgeon were discovered, sir.

Sir P. I am really surprised.

Per. No, sir, do not be astonished. I will tell you about more extraordinary things than these (ravens, lion cubs, porpoises, and sturgeons).

Sir P. What should these unusual things signify ?

Per. The very day when I left London, a whale was found in the river near Woolwich, and it is said that the whale kept waiting there for several months in order to upset the merchant ships of Stoda.

Sir P. Is it really believable ? But then, I am sure that the whale was sent from Spain by Spinola who commanded the Spanish and Italian troops in Netherlands. Will they not give up these schemes or undertakings ? Well, sir let me hear other news.

Per. Surely ; Stone, the stage comedian is dead, and therefore, there is a great necessity for a tavern fool (a fool who entertains the tavern people or visitors).

Sir P. Is Mr. Stone dead ?

Per. He is dead, sir. Did you really take him to be immortal ? O, this knight (Sir Politick Would-be), if he were widely known, would have been a very good fool (clown) in the English theatre ; the dramatist who would sketch the character of Sir Politick Would-be regarded as having drawn an imaginary character (because Sir Politick is so unusually clownish) and also having painted him out some of grudge against some particular living person whom he wanted to caricature. [*Aside.*

Sir P. Is Stone really dead ?

Per. Dead indeed. But, sir, you are feeling so keenly for him ; was he a relative to you ?

Sir P. I used to know him. But then, he was an unknown person.

Per. Yet how could you know him sir ?

Sir P. I did so. Sir,
I knew him one of the most dangerous heads
Living within the state, and so I held him.
per. Indeed, sir ?
Sir P. While he lived, in action.
He has received weekly intelligence,
Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
For all parts of the world, in cabbages ;
And those dispensed again to ambassadors,
In oranges, musk-melons apricocks,
Lemons, pome-citrons, and such like ; sometimes
In Colchester oysters, and your Selsey cockles.
Per. You make me wonder.
Sir P. Sir, upon my knowledge.
Nay, I've observed him, at your public ordinary,
Take his advertisement from a traveller,
A conceal'd statesman, in a trencher of meat ;
And instantly, before the meal was done,
Convey an answer in a tooth-pick.
Per. Strange !
How could this be, sir ?
Sir P. Why, the meat was cut
So like his character, and so laid, as he
Must easily read the cipher.
Per. I have heard,
He could not read, sir.
Sir P. So 'twas given out,
In policy, by those that did employ him :
But he could read, and had your languages,
And to't, as sound a noddle—
Per. I have heard, sir,
That your baboons were spies, and that they were
A kind of subtle nation near to China.

Sir P. I knew him all right. I knew him as one of the most dangerous persons in England.

Per. Is it really so ?

Sir P. So long he was alive and also active (in his job as a spy), he used to collect informations from all corners of the world, which were concealed in such things as cabbages, oranges, musk-melons, apricots, lemons, pome-citrons, Colchester oysters and in Selsey cockles, and which he used to convey to the ambassadors of various countries.

Per. You are really astonishing me.

Sir P. Sir, I used to know all this. Not only that but I used to notice him in the public inns (taverns) taking advertisements in plates of meat from travellers who were political diplomats in disguise, and immediately after the dinner, conveying the informations (answers to certain questions) concealed in tooth-pick.

Per. Very strange indeed. But how could it be possible, sir ?

Sir P. It was quite easy because he used to cut the meat in such a manner as to resemble some letters by which one could easily read their meaning.

Per. But I heard that he was illiterate.

Sir P. It was out of diplomacy that he was declared to be an illiterate fellow by those who engaged him as a spy ; but he could read several languages quite perfectly.

Per. I have heard, sir, that baboons (monkeys) used to be engaged as spies, and that they are known as a very cunning nation that belongs to some place near about China.

Sir P. Ay, ay, your Mamaluchi. Faith, they had
Their hand in a French plot, or two ; but they
Were so extremely given to women, as
They made discovery of all : yet I
Had my advices here, on Wednesday last.
From one of their own coat, they were return'd,
Made their relations, as the fashion is,
And now stand fair for fresh employment.

Per. 'Heart!
This sir Pol will be ignorant of nothing. [*Aside.*
It seemse, sir, you know all.

Sir P. Not all, sir, but
I have some general notions. I do love
To note and to observe : though I live out,
Free from the active torrent, yet I'd mark
The currents and the passages of things,
For mine own private use ; and know the ebbs
And flows of state.

Per. Believe it, sir, I hold
Myself, in no small tie unto my fortunes,
For casting me thus luckily upon you,
Whose knowledge, if your bounty equal it,
May do me great assistance, in instruction
For my behaviour and my bearing, which
Is yet so rude and raw.

Sir P. Why, come you forth
Empty of rules for travel ?

Per. Faith, I had
Some common ones, from out that vulgar grammar,
Which he that cried Italian to me, taught me.

Sir P. Why this it is that spoils all our brave bloods,
Trusting our hopeful gentry unto pedants,
Fellows of outside, and mere bark. You seem
To be a gentleman, of ingenuous race :—
I not profess it, but my fate hath been
To be, where I have been consulted with.
In this high kind, touching some great men's sons,
Persons of blood and honour.—

Sir P. Yes, yes, the Egyptian soldiers (Mamaluchi or Mamelukes) are reported to have had some hand in one or two French conspiracies ; but they were so much addicted to women that their conspiracies were all exposed ; yet on last Wednesday, my secret informations were collected by one of such soldiers (Mamelukes) who because of their competency (in espionage) stand a good chance of fresh employment as spies.

Per. How strange indeed that this Sir Politick pretends to know everything (*Aside*). It seems that you know everything.

Sir P. Not everything, sir, but I have some amount of general knowledge. I am fond of observing and noting things. Though I do not take any active part in any of the current affairs yet I love to observe the drift of things, which are actually taking place these days, and which I love to note for my own private purposes ; and that is why, I have some idea of the changes which are occurring in the country (or in the government).

Per. I assure you that I consider it my great fortune that I have come in touch with a person like you ; and if you are generous enough like your boundless knowledge, I would request you to give me certain lessons on human conduct or how I should behave, particularly when I know that I am very unpolished and uncivil in my manners.

Sir P. But did you leave your country without knowing any rules of conduct while on travel in foreign countries ?

Per. Surely, I knew some common rules which I picked up from my book of grammar and which I learnt from my tutor who taught me the Italian language and who are self-conceited.

Sir P. It is these tutors who possess superficial knowledge of things that spoil our younger generations with their wrong advice. You seem to be a gentleman belonging to some frank race. I do not like to boast but it has been my privilege to be entrusted by very respectable persons with their children for imparting to them the lessons on manners of good behaviour.

Scence II—*Enter* Mosca, *and* Nano *disguised, followed by persons with materials for erecting a Stage.*

Per. Who be these, sir ?

Mos. Under that window, there't must be. The same.

Sir P. Fellows, to mount a bank. Did your instructor
In the dear tongues, never discourse to you
Of the Italian mountebanks ?

Per. Yes, sir.

Sir P. Why,
Here you shall see one.

Per. They are quacksalvers :
Fellows, that live by venting oils and drugs.

Sir P. Was that the character he gave you of them ?

Per. As I remember.

Sir P. Pity his ignorance.
They are the only knowing men of Europe!
Great general scholars, excellent physicians,
Most admired statesmen, profest favourites,
And cabinet counsellors to the greatest princes ;
The only languaged men of all the world !

Per. And, I have heard they are most lewd impostors;
Made all of terms and shreds ; no less beliers
Of great men's favours, than their own vile med'cines ;
Which they will utter upon monstrous oaths ;
Selling that drug for two-pence, ere they part
Which they have valued at twelve crowns before.

Sir P. Sir, calumnies are answer'd best with silence.
Yourself shall judge.—Who is it mounts, my friends ?

Mos. Scoto of Mantua, sir.

Sir P. Is't he ? Nay, then
I'll proudly promise, sir, you shall behold
Another man than has been phant'sied to you.
I wonder yet, that he should mount his bank,
Here in this nook, that has been wont t'appear
In face of the Piazza !—Here he comes.

Scene II—*Enter* **Mosca** *and* **Nano** *disguised followed by persons with materials for erecting a Stage.*

Per. Who are these people, sir ?

Mos. Under that window the stage has to be erected (the window in Corvino's house).

Sir P. These are persons who will erect a stage (mount a bank). Did not your tutor of the languages give you some idea of the mountebanks (quacks or bogus physicians who sell their drugs in the streets) ?

Per. Yes, sir, he did.

Sir P. Here you will see one mountebank.

Per. The mountebanks are quacks who exist by selling ointments and drugs.

Sir P. Did your tutor describe the mountebanks in that manner ?

Per. Yes, as far as I remember.

Sir P. I am sorry for your tutor's ignorance. The mountebanks are the only persons in Europe who know things. They are masters of general knowledge, very good physicians, very wise politicians, great favourites of the people, great advisers to the government or to the ruling princes, and the only literate people in the world (*i. e.* well-versed in language).

Per. But I have heard that the mountebanks are most licentious pretenders, most wretched beggars, more ungrateful and treacherous creatures than even their drugs, which are all bogus although they swear about their efficacy most loudly : they sell these drugs at paltry sums although in the beginning they announce a high price on them, say, twelve crown against two pence.

Sir P. The best way of silencing those who indulge in talking ill of others is not to say anything at all either for or against them. You better see things and judge for yourself.........

Who is coming upon the stage, my friends ?

Mos. Scoto of Mantua, sir.

Sir P. If it is really he, I can firmly assure you that you will see a man, who is quite different from what you have heard about a mountebank from your tutor. I am still doubtful if such a great man, who used to take his stand in front of the Piazza (an open square in Italy), would come upon the stage in such a corner (Corvino's window)—But here he is appearing.

Enter VOLPONE, *disguised as a mountebank Doctor, and followed by a crowd of people.*

Volp. Mount, zany. [*to Nano.*]

Mob. Follow, follow, follow, follow!

Sir P. See how the people follow him! he's a man
May write ten thousand crowns in bank here. Note,
[*Volpone mounts the Stage.*
Mark but his gesture:—I do use to observe
The state he keeps in getting up.

Per. 'Tis worth it, sir.

Volp. *Most noble gentlemen, and my worthy patrons! It may seem strange, that I, your Scoto Mantuano, who was ever wont to fix my bank in face of the public Piazza, near the shelter of the Portico to the Procuratia, should now, after eight months' absence from this illustrious city of Venice, humbly retire myself into an obscure nook of the Piazza.* 38

Sir P. Did not I now object the same?

Per. Peace, sir.

Volp. *Let me tell you: I am not, as your Lombard proverb saith, cold on my feet: or content to part with my commodities at a cheaper rate, than I am accustomed; looknot for it. Nor that the calumnious reports of that impudent detractor) and shame to our profession, (Alessandro Buttone, I mean,) who gave out, in public. I was condemned a sforzato to the galleys, for poisoning the cardinal.*

Bembo's—cook, hath at all attached, much less dejected me. No, no, worthy gentlemen; to tell you true, I cannot endure to see the rabble of these ground ciarlitani, that spread their cloaks on the pavement, as if they meant to do feats of activity, and then come in lamely, with their so mouldy tales out of Boccaccio, like stale Tabarine, the fabulist: some of them discoursing their travels, and of their tedious captivity in the Turks' gallies, when, indeed, were the truth known, they were the Christians' gallies, where very temperately they ate bread, and drank water, as a wholesome penance, enjoined them by their confessors, for base pilferies.

Enter **Volpone,** *disguised as a mountebank Doctor, and followed by a crowd of people.*

Volp. Get up on the stage, fool (To Nano)

Mos. Get up on the stage ; go. go.

Sir P. See how he is attended by so many people. He is so wealthy that he can issue a cheque of ten thousand crowns on the spot. Mark (Volpone mounts the stage) his gait and looks. I remember his majestic way of getting up on the stage.

Per. It is really remarkable, sir.

Volp. Most respectable gentlemen and my noble patrons: you may be surprised to find me putting up a stage in some unknown corner of the Piazza here when you know that I used to have my stage in front of the public Piazza close to the shelter of the Portico to the Procuratia. But I should tell you that during the last eight months I was away from this famous city of Venice.

Sir P Did not I tell you like that ?

Per Please keep quiet, sir.

Volp. Let me assure you that I am not depressed or poor, and therefore, I am not ready to dispose of my wares (sell my drugs) at any cheaper rate than I am used to do so ; do not expect it, from me (reduction of price). Do not think that I have been in the least depressed at heart by the false scandal attributed to me by Alessandro Buttone, who is a disgrace to our profession and who gave publicity to the false rumour that I was condemned to be a galley slave for having poisoned Cardinal Bambo's cook. Noble gentlemen, to speak the truth, I cannot stand the sight of those mountebanks, who spread their wares on the footpaths of the streets as if they want to perform some magical feat, and actually some of them perform such feats and relate stale tales, which they have picked up from Boccaccio, the great Italian writer ; they relate these worn-out stories like the famous clown, Tabarine. Some of these street mountebanks relate stories of their travels or of their slavery in the boats of the Turks, although in reality these boats belonged to the Christians, and in these boats they were punished to take very ordinary food and drink because of their crime of pilfering or cheating people.

Sir P. Note but his bearing, and contempt of these.

Volp. *These turdy-facy-nasty-paty-lousy-fartical rogues, with one poor groat's-worth of unprepared antimony, finely wrapt up in several scartoccios, are able, very well, to kill their twenty a week, and play: yet, these meagre, starved spirits who have half stopt the organs of their minds with earthy oppilations, want not their favourers among your shrivell'd sallad-eating artizans, who are overjoyed that they may have their half-pe'rth of physic; though it purge them into another world, it makes no matter.*

Sir P. Excellent! have you heard better language, sir?

Volp. *Well, let them go. And gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, know, that for this time, our bank, being thus removed from the clamours of the canaglia, shall be the scene of pleasure and delight; for I have nothing to sell, little or nothing to sell.*

Sir P. I told you, sir, his end.

Per. You did so, sir.

Volp. *I protest, I, and my six servants, are not able to make of this precious liquor, so fast as it is fetch'd away from my lodging by gentlemen of your city; strangers of the Terr-afirma; worshipful merchants; ay, and senators too; who, ever since my arrival, have detained me of their uses, by their splendidous liberalities. And worthily: for, what avails your rich man to have his magazines stuft with mosca delli or of the purest grape, when his physicians prescribe him, on pain of death, to drink nothing but water cocted with aniseeds? O, health! health! the blessing of the rich! the riches of the poor! who can buy thee at too dear a rate, since there is no enjoying this world without thee? Be not then so sparing of your purses, honourable gentlemen, as to abridge the natural course of life—*

Per. You see his end.

Sir P. Ay is't not good?

Sir P. Just mark his manner of expressing his contempt for the street mountebanks.

Volp. These wretched knaves (mountebanks) have their worthless ointments or drugs (which are hardly even penny-worth) covered very carefully in several folds of paper, and they succeed in selling their drugs to poor customers and also in killing them at least twenty a week : but then, there is no want of buyers of such bogus medicines amongst the poor labourers, who consider themselves really very fortunate to have such a remedy at such a small sum (half a penny) although the drug kills them and sends them to the other world.

Sir P. Very good. Have you ever heard any better expression than this, sir ?

Volp Let me drop the talk of these street mountebanks. Respectable gentlemen, I can assure you that our stage has been raised for the time being furthest away from the stir and bustle of the crowd only to lend you pleasure and entertainment and not to sell any medicine to you.

Sir P. I told you about his mission that it is not at all for earning money.

Per. Yes, you said like that, sir.

Volp. I declare that there is such a great demand for the valuable drink that myself and six other assistants cannot prepare this drink so quickly, as it is taken away from my place by the respectable gentry of the city of Venice as well as by the unknown gentlemen of the Netherlands and also by the senators, who, ever since my arrival, have detained me for their personal service and have rewarded me most generously with gifts, and rightly too they have done so, because what is the good on the part of a wealthy person to keep a store-house of delicious wines and grapes if the doctors prescribe for him aromatic water? It is health which is the most precious thing for the rich and the poor, because without health nothing in the world is enjoyable. So, worthy gentlemen, do not be miserly in spending money on medicines to prevent the shortening of your life.

Per. Do you see his motive (to earn money) ?

Sir P. Yes, is not his motive good ?

Volp. *For, when a humid flux, or catarrh, by the mutability of air, falls from your head into an arm or shoulder, or any other part; take you a ducket, or your chequin of gold, and apply to the place affected: see what good effect it can work. No, no, 'tis this blessed unguento, this rare extraction, that hath only power to disperse all malignant humours, that proceed either of hot, cold, moist, or windy causes—*

Per. I would, he had put in dry too.

Sir P. 'Pray you, observe.

Volp. *To fortify the most indigest and crude stomach, ay, were it of one that, through extreme weakness, vomited blood, applying only a warm napkin to the place, after unctian and fricace;—for the vertigine in the head, putting but a drop into your nostrils, likewise behind the ears; a most sovereign and approved, remedy: the mal caduco, cramps, convulsions, paralysies epilepsies, tremor-cordia, retired nerves, ill vapours of the spleen, stopping of the liver, the strangury, hernia ventosa, iliaca passio; stops a dysenteria immediately; easeth the torsion of the small guts: and cures melancholia hypondriaca, being taken and applied according to my printed receipt.* [Pointing to his bill and his vial.] *For, this is the physician, this is the medicine; this counsels, thatcures; this gives the direction, this works the effect; and, in sum both together may be termed as abstract of the theorick and practick in the Aesculapian art. 'Twill cost you eight crowns. And,—Zan Fritada, prithee sing a verse extempore in honour of it.*

Sir P. How do you like him, sir?

Per. Most strangely, I!

Sir P. Is not his language rare?

Per. But alchemy,
I never heard the like; or Broughton's books.

Volp. Whenever due to the change of weather there is any inflammation of the mucous membrane in any part of your body, apply a gold coin to the spot, and see what a good effect it has upon the disease. No, it is this most beneficial ointment, which is a rare preparation and which has the power of curing all the evil humours in the body, which again are produced by the various elements of nature (the humours of blood, phlegm, choler, melancholy are produced by fire, air, water and earth)

Per I wish, he had added the word 'dry' too.

Sir P. Please listen to him.

Volp If you have a weak stomach, which is incapable of digestion, and if you vomit blood, just apply this ointment after massaging the stomach and put a napkin (a small towel) over it. If you suffer from giddiness of the head (virtigo) put a drop of the ointment into your nostrils and also touch the back of your ears with it. It is a good and sure remedy or relief for the diseases such as apoplexy (falling sickness), pains in the joints (cramps), spasms, rheumatic numbness of any of the limbs, fainting-fit (epilepsy) palpitation of the heart (tremor-cordia), contraction of the nerves, toxins, enlargement of the liver, gall stone, difficult urination (stranguiry), strangulation of the intestines (hernia ventosa), colic pain (iliaca passio), contraction of the intestines (torsion of the small guts), chronic sadness or spirit, and dysentery. The medicine should be taken or applied strictly in accordance with the instructions printed in the paper enclosed with it, (pointing to his bill and his vial). This is the doctor ; this is the medicine, these are the instructions ; these are the effects—all of which together can be regarded as theory and practice of the medical science or art. The price of it all is eight crowns only. Zanny, just sing a song in praise of the medicine.

Sir P Don't you like him, sir ?

Per Most wonderfully, sir.

Sir P. Are not his expressions most wonderful ?

Per I have not heard of such expression except in the black art (magic) or in the books of Broughton who was a great scholar in the Hebrew language.

NANO *sings.*

Had old Hippocrates, or Galen,
That to their books put med'cines all in,
But known this secret, they had never
(Of which they will be guilty ever)
Been murderers of so much paper.
Of wasted many a hurtless taper;
No Indian drug had e'er been famed,
Tobacco, sassafras not named;
Ne yet, of guacum one small stick, sir,
Nor Raymund Lully's great elixir.
Ne had been known the Danish Gonswart,
Or Paracelsus, with his long sword.

Per. All this, yet, will nor do; eight crowns is high.

Volp. *No more.—Gentlemen, if I had but time to discourse to you the miraculous effects of this my oil, surnamed Oglio del Scoto: with the countless catalogue of those I have cured of the aforesaid, and many more diseases: the patents and privileges of all the princes and commonwealths of Christendom; or but the depositions of those that appeared on my part, before the signiory of the Sanita and most learned College of Physicians; where I was authorised, upon notice taken of the admirable virtues of my medicaments, and mine own excellency in matter of rare and unknown secrets, not only to disperse them publicly in this famous city, but in all the territories, that happily joy under the government of the most pious and magnificent states of Italy. But may some other gallant fellow say, O, there be divers that make profession to have as good, and as experimented receipts as yours: indeed, very many have assayed, like apes, in imitation of this oil: bestowed great cost in furnaces, stills, alembecks, continual fires, and preparation of the ingredients (as indeed there goes to it six hundred several simples, besides some quantity of human fat, for the conglutination, which we buy of the anatomists), but, when these practitioners come to the last decoction, blow, blow, puff, puff, and all flies in fumo; ha, ha! Poor wretches! I rather pity their folly and indiscretion, than their loss of time and money: for these may be recovered by industry: but to be a fool born, is a disease incurable.*

Nano *sings*

If Hippocrates or Galen (ancient Greek physicians) had known this medicine of mine, they would not have wasted so much of paper or burnt so many candles in the night in order to write so many books in which they have mentioned all kinds of medicine. No medicine in the world can compare with this medicine, neither any Indian nor any Danish nor any Swiss medicine, such as tobacco or the bark and pith of a tree or the sap or juice of the tree known as gauacum, or even the drink which was discovered by Raymond Lily, which makes one immortal or immune from all diseases, or any medicine of Gonswort or Paracelsus, who was believed to carry a sword that concealed a demon in it and was, therefore, most formidable to the enemy.

Per. All this high talk about the medicine will not attract the customers if its price is as high as eight crowns.

Volp. No more talk, gentlemen. I wish I had time to talk more about the wonderful effects of the oil which is named '*Oglio del Scoto*'. I wish I could mention the names of the various princes and rulers of the Christian countries, who were cured of various foul and mortal diseases from which they generally suffer, and who have talked so highly of my medicine. I wish, I could show you the testimonials, which have been given to me by the great physicians and health authorities by whom I have been authorised to pass as one possessing the rarest secrets of Medicines and also great scholarship in the medical science in this great city of Venice as well as in all the territories, which are under the benign g vernment of Italy. But some of the impertinent persons may say that there are many medicines like mine in the market, and in answer to them, I would like to say that many of such persons have tried to copy my medicines by spending a lot of money, time, and energy by erecting furnaces and machineries of distillation, because this oil of mine requires six hundred substances along with human fat: but then, when they come to the last stage of preparation of the oil, they hopelessly fail in producing the same stuff, which I have produced. Poor creatures, I pity their stupidity and foolishness rather than their loss of money, time and energy, because these latter can be recovered to some extent by means of hard labour ; but then, inborn stupidity cannot be cured by any means.

For myself, I always from my youth have endeavoured to get the rarest secrets, and book them, either in exchange, or for money; I spared nor cost nor labour, where anything was worthy to be learned. And, gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, I will undertake, by virtue of chemical art, out of the honourable hat that covers your head, to extract the four elements; that is to say, the fire, air, water and earth, and return you your felt without burn or stain For, whilst others have been at the Balloo, I have been at my book: and am now past the craggy paths of study, and come to the flowery plains of honour and reputation.

Sir P. I do assure you, sir, that is his aim.

Volp. But to our price—

Per. And that withal, sir Pol.

Volp. You all know, honourable gentlemen, I never valued this ampulla, or vail, at less than eight crowns; but for this time, I am content to be deprived of it for six; six crowns is the price, and less in courtesy I know you cannot offer me; take it, or leave it, howsoever, both it and I am at your service. I ask you not as the value of the thing, for then I should demand of you a thousand crowns, so the cardinals Montalto, Fernese, the great Duke of Tuscany, my gossip, with divers other princes, have given me; but I despise money. Only to shew my affection to you, honourable gentlemen, and your illustrious State here, I have neglected the messages of these princes, mine own offices, framed my journey hither, only to present you with fruits of my travels —Tune your voices once more to the touch of your instruments. and give the honourable assembly some delightful recreation.

Per What monstrous and most painful circumstance
Is here, to get some three or four gazettes,
Some three-pence in the whole! for that 'twill come to.

So far as I am concerned, from very early years, I have always tried to collect the rarest secrets (of herds and substances) either by paying heavily in cash or in kind (i. e. by paying money or by giving something in exchange of the medicines). In order to learn the secrets of health and the medical science, I never hesitated to spend my money or time or energy. Honourable gentlemen, I can assure you that by the strength of my knowledge of rhe medical science, I can take out from your hats all the four elements (fire, earth, air and water), and yet leave the hats absolutely uninjured or even stained or discoloured anyway. While people had been attending the theatre and enjoying the performances, I had been busy reading various books, and that is why, I am now free from the hard work of study and am now enjoying honour and reputation as the reward of my lifelong labour.

Sir P. I assure you, sir that his aim is honour and reputation, and not money.

Volp. But so far the price of my oils is concerned.........

Per. Money is also his aim, Sir Politick.

Volp, You all must be knowing that I never put any lower price on this oil than eight crowns ; but at present, I am prepared to take off two crowns (i. e. accept six crowns only) and you too will not offer me anything less than that out of your sense of justice. You can accept it or not but you will get it and also all my services along with it. If I were to demand the real price of my medicine, I should demand a thousand crowns which I have been paid by the cardinals Montalto, Fernese and the great Duke of Tuscany and by many other rulers. But I hate money. Only out of my love for you I have come here to offer you this medicine even after neglecting the requests of many of the rulers and also my valuable profession... Sing in harmony with your musical instruments the praise of my medicine for the entertainment of this honourable company.

Per. What an absurd show has been put up here, and how much of painful exertion is being put forward in order to earn three or four pence which, I am sure, the man will demand for his oil in the long run.

NANO *sings.*

You that would last long, list to my song,
Make no more coil, but buy of this oil.
Would you be ever fair and young ?
Stout of teeth, and strong of tongue ?
Tart of palate ? quick of ear ?
Sharp of sight ? of nostril clear ?
Moist of hand ? and light of foot ?
Or, I will come nearer to't,
Would you live free from all diseases ?
Do the act your mistress pleases,
Yet fright all aches from your bones ?
Here's a medicine for the nones.

Volp, *Well, I am in a humour at this time to make a present of the small quantity my coffer contains ; to the rich in courtesy, and to the poor for God's sake. Wherefore now mark ; I ask'd you six crowns ; and six crowns, at other times, you have paid me ; you shall not give me six crowns, nor five, nor four, nor three nor two, nor one ; nor half a ducat ; no, nor a moccinigo. Six pence it you, six hundred pound—expect no lower price, for, by the will cost banner of my front, I will not bate a bogatine, —that I will have, only, a pledge of your loves, to carry something from amongst you, to shew I am not condemn'd by you. Therefore, now, toss your handkerchiefs, cheerfully ; and be advertised, that the first heroic spirit that deigns to grace me with a handkerchief, I will give it a little remembrance of something, beside, shall please it better, than if I had presented with a double pistolet,*

Per. Will you be that *heroic spavk*, Sir Pol ?
[*Celia at a window above, throws down her handkerchief.*
O, see ! the window has prevented you.

Nano *Sings.*

You who would like to live long should listen to me. Do not make any further bargain but buy this oil. Do you want to be fair in complexion and youthful in appearance ? Do you want to have strong teeth and powerful tongue (capable of eating much) ? Do you want to have a strong palate, sharp ears and keen eyesight ? Do you want your nostrils to be free from mucous ? Do you want to be wet in the hands (but moist hand is not a sign of good health) or quick in steps ? Or to talk to the point more closely, do you want to live perfectly healthy free from all diseases ? Do you want to satisfy your wife by being sexually strong and be completely free from all sorts of pains in the body ? Then, here is the medicine to serve all the purpose.

Volp. Well, I am in a mood at present to make a gift of a small quantity of my oil to the rich persons out of courtesy and to the poor people out of kindness for them, so now listen to me. I demanded six crowns which you at other times actually paid me. You will not have to pay me any crown or ducat or moccinigo (a Vetican coin worth about nine pence) I will demand only six pence although it will cost you six hundred pounds. Do not expect me to reduce the price any further because in the name of the sacred flag of my trade, I am telling you that I will not reduce the price even by the third part of a farthing (begatine). I want to have the assurance of your love, to carry some token which I will show to the world to prove that I have not been depreciated by you. Therefore, now throw some handkerchief most heartily at me. The person who will throw it first will receive from me some token of remembrance and not any petty coin like a pistole (pistole is a Spanish coin which is worth 18 Francs).

Per. Will you be that heroic soul to throw a handkerchief Sir Politick ? (Celia at a window above, throws down her handkerchief) O, look ! The window (Celia) has been the first to throw the handkerchief, and so, it has prevented you from throwing your handkerchief.

Volp. *Lady, I kiss your bounty; and for this timely grace you have done yaur poor Scoto of Mantua, I will return you, over and above my oil, a secret of that high and inestimable nature, shall make you for ever enamour'd on that minute, wherein your eye first descended on so mean, yet not altogether to be despised, an object. Here is a powder conceal'd in this paper, of which, if I should speak to the worth, nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that line as a word; so short is this pilgrimage of man (which some call life) to the expressing of it. Would I reflect on the price? why, the whole world is but as an empire, that empires as a Province, that province as a bank, ihat bank as a private purse to the purchase of it. I will only tell you; it is the powder that made Venus a goddess (given her by Apollo), that kept her perpetually young, clear'd her wrinkles, firm'd her gums, colour'd her hair, from her derived to Helen, and at the sack of Troy unfortunately lost: till now, in this our age, it was as happily recovered, by a studious antiquary, out of some ruins of Asia, who sent a moiety of it to the court of France, (but much sophisticated,) where with the ladies there, now, colour their hair. The rest, at this present, remains with me; extracted to a quintessence: so that, wherever it but touches in youth it perpetually preserves, in age restores the complexion; seats your teeth, did they dance like virginal jacks, firm as a wall; makes them white as ivory, that were black as—*

Volp Lady, I kiss your gift. In return of your prompt courtesy to me (Scoto of Mantua) by throwing your kerchief at him, I shall present you along with the magic oil something more which is priceless (invaluable) and which will endear you to everybody whomever you may look upon just as you have endeared yourself to me however poor I may be but not absolutely undeserving Here is a powder enclosed in a piece of paper, and to speak about its wonderful qualities would take nine thousand volumes of books even if a page were reduced to a line and a line were reduced to a word. Life is indeed too short to describe the merits of this powder. And if I were to tell you about its price, the whole world would not be equal to its value even if the world were reduced to a province and the province were reduced to a stage (on which I am standing). I should simply tell you that this powder was given to Venus by Apollo, which made her eternally young, which smoothed out all the wrinkles on her face, which made her tooth-gums quite firm and strong, which made all her skin extremely smooth and soft, which lent a golden colour to her locks of hair, which was transferred from her to Helen for whose sake the city of Troy was burnt to ashes, and which, therefore, was lost with the death of Helen ; but then, it was recovered by an ancient scholar out of some ruins in Asia, who sent a portion of the powder to the King of France (but much adulterated) and with that adulterated powder the ladics of France are now colouring their hair. The rest of the powder is lying with me in the form of an essence so that wherever it will be used it will restore youthfulness, it will brighten the complexion, it will make the teeth firm and strong however they may be shaky like the keys of a musical instrument (virginal jacks), and it will make the teeth as white as ivory even if they were as black as ....

Scene III—Politick, Peregrine.

Enter CORVINO

Cor. Spight o' the devil, and my shame ! come down here;
Come down ;—No house but mine to make your scene ?
Signior Flaminio. will you down, sir ? down ?
What, is my wife your Franciscina, sir ?
No windows on the whole Piazza, here,
To make your properties, but mine ? but mine ?
[*Beats away Volpone Nano, etc.*

Heart ! ere to-morrow I shall be new-christen'd,
And call'd the Pantalone di Besogniosi,
About the town.

Per. What should this mean, sir Pol ?
Sir P. Some trick state, believe ; I will home.
Per. It may be some design on you.
Sir P. I know not.

I'll stand upon my guard.

Per. It is your best, sir.

Sir P. This three weeks, all my advices, all my letters ;
They have been intercepted.

Per. Indeed, sir !
Best have a care.

Sir P. Nay, so I will.

Per. This knight,
I may not lose him, for my mirth, till night. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III—Politick, Peregrene.

Enter **Corvino.**

Corv. In the name of the malicious devil and also to save my disgrace that I have been put to, come down from the bank (stage). Could you not choose any other place than my house for making such a scene. Mr. Lover, (Signior Flaminio) will you come dowa or not, sir? Do you mean to say that my wife is your lady-love (Franciscina)? Could you not choose any other corner in the whole of the square (Piazza) except the window of my house?

Beats away **Volpone, Nano** *etc.*

I am sure, before tomorrow, I shall be named the fool of beggars (cuckold ?) in the whole city.

Fer. What does it signify, Sir Politick ?

Sir P. I am sure, it must be the work of some government (political) agent. I shall go home.

Per. It may be some conspiracy against you.

Sir P. I don't know ; but I will be on guard.

Per. That is the best thing for you to do, sir.

Sir P. For the last three weeks all my secret informations and letters have not been reaching my hand.

Per. Is it really so ? It is best that you should be careful.

Sir P. Surely, I shall be careful.

Per. This Sir Politick I do not like to lose for my entertainment till tonight. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV—*A Room in* Volpone's *House*

Enter VOLPONE *and* MOSCA

Volp. O, I am wounded !
Mos. Where, sir ?
Volp. Not without ;
Those blows were nothing ; I could bear them ever.
But angry Cupid, bolting from her eyes,
Hath shot himself into me like a flame ;
Where, now, he flings about his burning heat,
As in a furnance an ambitious fire,
Whose vent is stopt. The fight is all within me.
I cannot live, except thou help me, Mosca ;
My liver melts, and I, without the hope
Of some soft air, from her refreshing breath,
Am but a heap of cinders.
Mos. 'Las good sir,
Would you had never seen her !
Volp. Nay, would thou
Had'st never told me of her !
Mos. Sir, 'tis true !
I do confess I wos unfortunate,
And you unhappy : but I'm bound in conscience,
No less than duty, to effect my best
To your release of torment and I will, sir.
Volp. Dear Mosca, shall I hope ?
Mos. Sir, more than dear,
I will not bid you to despair of aught
Within a humnn compass.
Volp. O, there spoke
My better angle. Mosca, take my keys,
Gold, plate, and jewels, all's at thy devotion ;
Employ them how thou wilt ; nay, coin me too :
So thou, in this, but crown my longings, Mosca.
Mos. Use but your patience.
Volp. So I have.
Mos. I doubt not
To bring success to your desires.
Volp. Nay, then,
I not repent me of my late disguise.

Scene IV—*A Room in* Volpone's *House.*

Enter **Volpone** *and* Mosca.

Volp. O, I am injured.

Mos. But where, sir ?

Volp. Not anywhere externally (i. e. not in the body) ; any injury to the body would have mattered nothing to me, because I could bear it allright. But then, Cupid (the god of love) has most furiously darted the glances of her (Celia's eyes and shot me in such a manner that I am all aflame (burning) now, and he is scattering the fire in me just as in a furnace without any opening ; it goes on burning terribly inside. The struggle is going on inside me (in my heart), and unless you help me, Mosca, I cannot live. My liver (heart) is melting with the fire of love and unless I can get the soft breath of hers (Celia) I shall be reduced to ashes.

Mos. It is a pity, sir. I wish, you had n ver seen her.

Volp. But I also wish that you had never told me about her.

Mos. You are right, sir. I admit that I was unfortunate to tell you about Celia and you are unhappy by having seen her. But then, I feel it my moral duty to help you in relieving the pain of your heart as best as I can ; and I assure you that I shall try my best to help you.

Volp. Dear Mosca, shall I expect to get her ?

Mos. Sir, you are dearer to me than my life. I would advise you not to despair of anything which is within the power of man to accomplish.

Volp. O, it is hore, the better angel that is speaking now. Mosca, take all my keys to open the treasure-house of all my wealth—gold, plates, jewels—which you can possess as the reward of your loyalty to me, and which you can use in any manner you like ; you can even change my body into gold coins in order to add to your wealth ; but please satisfy my hankering, Mosca.

Mos. But please hold your patience.

Volp. So I am doing.

Mos. I have no doubt about fulfiling your hankerings.

Volp. Then, I do not regret that I played the role of the mountebank.

Mos. If you can horn him, sir, you need not.

Volp. True:
Besides, I never meant him for my heir.—
Is not the colour of my beard and eyebrows
To make me known?

Mos. Not jot.

Volp. I did it well.

Mos. So well, would I could follow you in mine,
With half the happiness!—and yet I would
Escape your epilogue. [*Aside.*

Volp. But were they gull'd
With a belief that I was Scoto?

Mos. Sir,
Scoto himself could hardly have distinguish'd!
I have not time to flatter you now; we'll part;
And as I prosper, so applaud my art. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V—*A Room in* Corvino's *House.*

Enter **Corvino**, *with his sword in his hand, dragging in* **Celia.**

Corv. Death of mine honour, with the city's fool;
A juggling, tooth-drawing, prating mountebank!
And at a public window! where, whilst he,
With his strain'd action, and his dole of faces,
To his drug-lecture draws your itching ears,
A crew of old, unmarried, noted letchers,
Stood learing up like satyrs; and you smile
Most graciously, and fan your favours forth,
To give your hot spectators satisfaction!
What, was your mountebank their call,? their whistle?
Or were you enamour'd on his copper rings,
His saffron jewel, with the toad-stone in't,
Or his embroider'd suit, with the cope stitch,
Made of a herse cloth? or his old tilt-feather?
Or his starch'd beard? Well, you shall have him, yes!
He shall come home, and minister unto you
The fricace for the mother. Or, let me see,
I think you'd rather mount; would you not mount?
Why, if you'll mount, you may; yes, truly, you may:
And so you may be seen, down to the foot.

Mos. If you can make him a fool (cuckold) you should have no regret·

Volp. You are quite right. I never wanted to make him my successor. Do you think, the colour of my beard and eyebrows is likely to betray my identity ?

Mos. Not in the least.

Volp. I played my part quite well then.

Mos. So well indeed that if I could follow my plan with half the success, I would have escaped the beating by Corvino. [*Aside.*

Volp. But were they really fooled with the belief that I was Scoto of Mantua ?

Mos. Sir, Scoto himself could not have played the part so well as you have done. I have no time to raise any false hope before you now (or to praise you unduly). We shall take leave of each other for the time being. You can praise my plan when it has succeeded. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V—*A Room in* Corvino's *House.*

Enter **Corvino,** *with his sword in his hand, dragging in* **Celia.**

Corv. You have ruined my honour by flirting with the city's fool. the juggler (magician), the street dentist, the bragging or bogus quack ; and all this shameful action you did standing near your window before the public gaze, while the mountebank, by his artificial actions and disguised looks, attracted your lustful (or i quisitive) ears by his lectures on bogus medicines A crowd of unmarried lustful persons stood gazing at you with lustful eyes just like satyrs or gods looking like half-animal and half-human. You smiled at them most temptingly and showered your vulgar tokens of favour upon them in order to satisfy their vulgar passions. Was the mountebank a pimp (or tout or procurer) on behalf of the licentious crowd : or were you so much in love with the uncouth dress and jewels which he was putting on such as his copper rings, saffron jewels, toad-stone, embroidered garments, the cope-stitch, the winding sheet and his tiltfeather and stiff beards which were stiffened by starch ? Well, you will positively have him, and he will positively visit you in order to give you the proper massage of the body in order to make you a mother. No, let me think further in

Get you a cittern, lady Vanity,
And be a dealer with the virtuous man ;
Make one : I'll but protest myself a cuckold,
And save your dowry. I'm a Dutchman, I !
For, if you thought me an Italian,
You would be damn'd, ere you did this, you whore !
Thou'dst tremble, to imagine that the murder
Of father, mother, brother, all thy race,
Should follow, as the subject of my justice.

Cel. Good sir, have patience.

Corv. What couldst thou propose
Less to thyself, than in this heat of wrath
And stung with my dishonour, I should strike
This steel into thee, with as many stabs,
A thou wert gaz'd upon with goatish eyes ?

Cel. Alas, sir, be appeased ! I could not think
My being at the window should more now
Move your impatience, that at other times.

Corv. No ! not to seek and entertain a parley
What a known knave, before a multitude !
You were and actor with your handkerchief,
Which he most sweetly kist in the receipt,
And might, no doubt, return it with a letter,
And point the place where you might meet ; your sister's,
Your mother's or your aunt's might serve the turn.

Cel. Why, dear sir, when do I make these excuses,
Or ever stir abroad, but to the church ?
And that so seldom—

your favour. You will climb higher behind the window or climb the stage of the mountebank so that your legs and other delicate parts of your body may be seen by the vulgar crowd ; or so that you may be partner in the trade of the mountebank and play some guitar or flute in order to enchant your customers. Yes, you should make yourself a partner to the mountebank so that I may be declared a cuckold (a fool whose wife is faithless) and thereby I may be free from the penalty of paying you any compensation (dowry) which I agreed to pay at the time of your marriage with me in case I deserted you or proved to be faithless to you. I am not an Italian (who generally allows his wife to be faithless) but I am a Dutchman (i. e. most revengeful in the matter of treachery in love); and therefore, before you become a partner to the mountebank, you would be completely ruined because I would murder not only you but your whole family of father, mother, brother and everybody else, in order to fulfil my revenge.

Cel. Gentle sir, please be patient.

Corv. What lesser penalty can you suggest for yourself when I am in such terrible fits of anger because of my wounded honour, and particularly when I want to cut you to pieces with this sword as you cast your amorous glances at those vulgar lustful persons ?

Cel. Alas, sir, please quench your anger. I could never imagine that my standing near the window would excite your anger, more than it ever did before on similar occasions.

Corv. Do you mean to say that you did not try to have secret communications with that notorious rogue (the mountebank) in the presence of the crowd ? You were merely playing a part by throwing your kerchief at him which was kissed most endearingly by him, and in return of your token of love he might send you some love-letter in which he would have asked you to meet him secretly either at your sister's place or in your mother's house or in your aunt's place on some excuse or other.

Cel. Why do you speak this ? When did I make such excuses or when did I ever move out of my house except while going to the church on very rare occasions ?

Corv. Well, it shall be less ;
And thy restraint before was liberty,
To what I now decree : and therefore mark me.
First, I will have this bawdy light damm'd up ;
And till't be done, some two or three yards off,
I'll chalk a line : o'er which if thou but chance
To set thy desperate foot, more hell, more horror,
More wild remorseless rage shall seize on thee,
Than on a conjuror, that had heedless left
His circle's safety ere his devil was laid.
Then here's a lock which I will hang upon thee,
And, now I think on't, I will keep thee backwards ;
Thy lodging shall be backwards ; thy walks backwards ;
Thy prospect, all be backwards ; and no pleasure,
That thou shalt know but backwards ; nay, since you force
My honest nature, know, it is your own,
Being too open, makes me use you thus :
Since you will not contain your subtle nostrils
In a sweet room, but they must snuff the air
Of rank and sweaty passengers. *[Knocking within,]*—One knocks.
Away, and be not seen, pain of thy life ;
Nor look toward the window : if thou dost—
Nay, stay, hear this—let me not prosper, whore,
But I will make thee an anatomy,
Dissect the mine own self, and read a lecture
Upon thee to the city, and in public.
Away !— *[Exit Celia.*

Enter Servant

Who's there ?

Serv. 'Tis signior Mosca, sir.

Scene VI—Corvino, Mosca.

Corv. Let him come in. *[Exit Serv.]* His master's dead : there's yet
Some good to help the bad.

Enter Mosca

My Mosca, welcome !
I guess your news.

Mos. I fear you cannot, sir.

Corv. Well, you will be now permitted to go out of your house much less than before ; and as compared with your future movements your past restraints would be regarded as considerable freedom (i. e. you will be allowed to go out much less than before). Now you listen to my commands. First of all I will seal up this window through which you held your illicit communications ; but before it is completely sealed, I will put down a circle two or three yards away from the window just as the boundary line beyond which you shall not be permitted to set your foot ; and if you ever step beyond this circle, much more fearful fits of anger will come upon me and I shall create a much greater hell and horror than you can ever imagine or than a sorcerer can fear the work of the devil if he ever happens to transgress the line which he marks out as the line of enchantment. I will put a lock on you ; I will put you in some back room so that everything you will see or do will not be seen by anybody. Do not think that it is my cruel natuer but it is your evil nature which is forcing all this restraint upon you, because even if you stay in a sweetly perfumed room (i. e. in respectable and honourable society) you will be tempted to look for diry smells (i. e. vulgar persons). (Knocking within). Somebody is knocking at the door. Get away from here ; do not show your face to anybody through the window. But if you do not obey my instructions, I will cut you to pieces just as a surgeon dissects a dead body, and then, I shall relate all your scandalous character before the whole city. [*Exit Celia*.

Enter **Servant.**

Who is knocking there ?

Serv. It is Mr. Mosca, sir.

Corv. Let him step in. (Exit Servant). His master (Volpone) must be dead ; and so, it seems that there is some good news (inheritance of Volpone's wealth) to neutralise the evil news (Celia's vulgar communications with the street mountebank).

Enter **Mosca.**

Welcome, my dear Mosca. I can guess what news you are going to convey me.

Mos. I am afraid, you cannot guess, sir.

Corv. Is't not his death ?
Mos. Rather the contrary.
Corv. Not his recovery ?
Mos. Yes, sir.
Corv. I am curs'd,
I am bewitch'd, my crosses meet to vex me.
How ? how ? how ? how ?
Mos. Why, sir, with Scoto's oil ;
Corbaccio and Voltore brought of it,
Whilst I was busy in an inner room—
Corv. Death ! that damn'd mountebank ; but for the law.
Now, I could kill the rascal : it cannot be.
His oil should have that virtue. Have not I
Known him a common rogue, come fidling in
To the osteria, with a tumbling whore,
And, when he has done all his forced tricks, been glad
Of a poor spoonful of dead wine, with flies in't ?
It cannot be. All his ingredients
Are a sheep's gall, a roasted bitch's marrow,
Some few sod earwigs, pounded caterpillars,
A little capon's grease, and fasting spittle :
I know them to a dram.
Mos. I know not, sir ;
But some of't, they pour'd into his ears,
Some in his nostrils, and recover'd him ;
Applying but the fricace.
Corv. Pox o' that fricace !
Mos. And since, to seem the more officious
And flatt'ring of his health, there, they have had,
At extreme fees, the college of physicians
Consulting on him, how they might restore him ;
Where one would have a cataplasm of spices,
Another a flay'd ape clappe'd to breast,
A third would have it a dog, a fourth an oil,
With wild cats' skins : at last, they all resolved

Corv. Is not your master dead ?

Mos. Quite the opposite.

Corv. Do you mean to say, he has recovered ?

Mos. Yes, sir.

Corv. I am unfortunate ; I am under the influence of some evil spirit. All my evil stars are now conspiring to upset me. But how did your master recover ?

Mos. It was Scoto's oil that cured him ; it was brought by Corbaccio and Voltore when I was busy with some job inside the house.

Corv. Curse upon that mountebank ! Had I not been afraid of the penalties of law I would have killed that mountebank (Scoto of Mantua). But it is impossible that his oil should be so very efficacious (effective). Have I not known that roguish mountebank who visits the inn with a tottering prostitute in his company and with a fiddle in his hand, who after he has performed all his foolish tricks, goes pleased with a little bit of stale wine with flies in it ? How can the oil of such a man be so efficacious particularly when I know that all his drugs contain such dirty elements as sheep's gall-bladder, roasted bitch's marrow (the pith inside the bone), boiled earwigs, powdered caterpillars, a castrated cock's fat (capon's grease), and the saliva of a starved creature. I know everyone of the ingredients which he uses in his drugs

Mos. I do not know how the oil cured him but I am told that the oil was poured partly into his ears and partly into his nostrils, and then his body was massaged—all of which helped to restore him to his health.

Corv. Curse upon that massage !

Mos. And because they were very anxious for his health, so they consulted many physicians at very heavy fees, one of whom suggested that some plaster of spices should be applied to his body while another recommended that some monkey with its skin taken off its body, should be fastened to his chest ; a fourth one suggested that instead of a flayed monkey, a flayed (fleeced) dog should be fastened to his chest ; but a fifth physician recommended that some oil with the

That, to preserve him, was no other means,
But some young woman must be straight sought out,
Lusty, and full of juice, to sleep by him ;
And to this service, most unhappily,
And most unwillingly, am I now employ'd,
Which here I thought to pre-acquaint you with,
For your advice, since it concerns you most ;
Because, I would not do that thing might cross
Your ends, on whom I have my whole dependence, sir :
Yet, if I do it not, they may delate
My slackness to my patron, work me out
Of his opinion ; and there all your hopes,
Ventures, or whatsoever, are all frustrate !
I do but tell you, sir. Besides, they are all
Now striving, who shall first present him ; therefore—
I could entreat you, briefly conclude somewhat ;
Prevent them if you can.

Corv. Death to my hopes,
This is my villainous fortune ! Best to hire
Some common courtezan

Mos. Ay, I thought on that, sir :
But they are all so subtle, full of art—
And age again doting and flexible,
So as—I cannot tell—we may, perchance,
Light on a quean may cheat us all.

Corv. 'Tis true.

Mos. No, no : it must be one that has no tricks, sir,
Some simple thing, a creature made unto it ;
Some wench you may command. Have you no kinswoman ?
Odso—Think, think, think, think, think, think, think, sir.
One o' the doctors offer'd there his daughter

Corv. How !

Mos. Yes, Signior Lupo, the physician.

Corv. His daughter !

skin of a cat should be massaged to his body. At last, all the doctors decided that to keep him alive, there was no other way but to procure a blooming young woman who should sleep with him; and for this purpose (for procuring a young woman) I have been entrusted with the responsibility. I thought of informing you of this development and of seeking your advice in the matter because the matter concerns you most, because I would not like to do anything which may go against your interest and which may consequently rob me of my very existence in the world which depends upon you entirely, sir. On the other hand, if I do not carry out the instructions of the physicians I may be accused of negligence of my duty to my master for which I may be removed from his house and thereby all your hopes about inheriting my master's wealth and property may be completely ruined. Then again, they are all now competing with one another in order to present a young blooming woman to my master for his health. That is why, I would like to entreat you to devise some means by which you can prevent them all from achieving their end (*i. e.* procuring a young woman for Volpone).

Corv. All my hopes are ruined now. Curse upon my evil star ! It would be the best thing if you prostitute for him (Volpone).

Mos. Yes, I thought of that, sir; but then, prostitutes are also very easy to be influenced and duped ; and therefore, I am not very sure if we will not procure a prostitute who may get all the wealth of my master willed in her favour and thereby deceive us all.

Corv. You are right.

Mos. No, no, we must not procure any prostitute but on the other hand, we should get some simple sort of a woman who may be under your full control. Have you not any such woman as your relative ? Just think a little seriously, because one of the physicians offered his own daughter for the puropse.

Corv. How is it possible ?

Mos. Yes, Mr. Lupo, the doctor has offered his own daughter.

Corv. Is it really his daughter ?

Mos. And a virgin, sir. Why ,alas,
He knows the state of 's body, what it is,
That nought can warm his blood, sir, but a fever ;
Nor any incantation raise his spirit :
A long forgetfulness hath seized that part.
Besides sir, who shall know it ? some one or two—

Corv. I pray thee give me leave. [*Walks aside.*] If any man
But I had had this luck—The thing in 't self,
I know, is nothing—Wherefore should not I
As well command my blood and my affections,
As this dull doctor ? In the point of honour,
The cases are all one of wife and daughter.

Mos. I hear him coming. [*Aside.*

Corv. She shall do't : 'tis done.
Slight ! if this doctor, who is not engaged,
Unless 't be for his counsel, which is nothing,
Offer his daughter, what should I, that am
So deeply in ? I will prevent him : Wretch !
Covetous wretch !—Mosca, I have determined.

Mos. How, sir ?

Corv. We'll make all sure. The party you wot of
Shall be mine own wife, Mosca.

Mos. Sir, the thing,
But that I would not seem to counsel you,
I should have motion'd to you, at the first :
And make your count, you have cut all their throats.
Why, 'tis directly taking a possession !
And in his next fit, we may let him go.
'Tis but to pull the pillow from his head,
And he is throttled : it had been done before,
But for your scrupulous doubts.

Mos. She is a virgin too (*i. e.* an undeflowered woman). The father knows the condition of my master's body, namely that nothing can make him hot (with passion) except fever, nor any magic can cheer up his spirit ; an impotency has seized his sex organ for a long time. Then again, who will come to know that the doctor is lending his daughter for the purpose ? Not more than one or two persons who may come to know of it.

Corv. Please give me some time to think. (*Walks aside*). If anybody else becomes the successor—the lending of one's wife or daughter is not at all objectionable (particularly to a dead man like Volpone). Why should not urge my own wife to serve the same purpose just as this stupid doctor has proposed to do ? So far the question of honour is concerned, there is no difference between a wife and a daughter.

Mos I hear him returning to me. [*Aside.*

Corv. She will serve the purpose ; it has been decided. If this doctor, who is not anyway connected with Volpone except for consultation as a physician. can offer his own daughter, what should I do when I have such a big stake (*i. e.*, when a candidate for the inheritance of Volpone's wealth) ? I will prevent the doctor from lending his daughter to Volpone. What a greedy creature he must be ! Mosca, I have finally decided.

Mos. What have you decided, sir ?

Corv We shall make everything sure. The woman you are proposing to procure for Volpone should be my wife.

Mos. Sir, I should have proposed to you the very same thing in the beginning but then, I did not like to advise you anyway. By deiding to lend your wife you have completely defeated your rivals and ruined their prospects ; you have actually become now the owner of Volpone's wealth and property. When my master has his next fit of unconsciousness we may finish him by pulling the pillow a little over his face and suffocating him. It would have been done long before but for your hesitation or your conscientious soul.

Corv. Ay, a plague on't,
My conscience fools my wit ! Well, I'll be brief.
And so be thou, lest they should be before us :
Go home, prepare him, tell him with what zeal
And willingness I do it ; swear it was
On the first hearing, as thou may'st do, truly,
Mine own free motion.

Mos. Sir, I warrant you,
I'll so possess him with it, that the rest
Of his starv'd clients shall be banish'd all ;
And only you received. But come not,sir,
Until I send, for I have something else
To ripen for your good, you must not know't.

Corv. But do not you forget to send now.

Mos. Fear not. [*Exit.*

Scene VII—Corvino, Celia.

Corv. Where are you, wife ? my Celia ! wife !

Re-enter CELIA.

—What, blubbering ?
Come, dry those tears. I think thou thought'st me in earnest;
Ha ! by this light I talk'd so but to try thee :
Methinks the lightness of the occasion
Should have confirm'd thee. Come, I am not jealous.

Cel. No !

Corv. Faith I am not, I, nor never was ;
It is a poor unprofitable humour.
Do not I know, if women have a will,
They'll do 'gainst all the watches of the world,
And that the fiercest spies are tamed with gold ?
Tut, I am confident in thee, thou shalt see't ;
And see I'll give thee cause too, to believe it.
Come kiss me. Go, and make thee ready, straight,
In all thy best attire, thy choicest jewels,
Put them all on, and, with them, thy best looks :
We are invited to a solemn feast,
At old Volpone's, where it shall appear
How far I am free from jealousy or fear. [*Exeunt.*

Corv. A curse upon my conscience which makes a fool of me. Well, I should like to make a short work of the whole thing and you should also do the same thing before they (the physicians or others) may baffle our purpose. Go home immediately and tell your master how earnestly and willingly I am landing my wife to him; assure him that as soon as I heard of the matter I agreed of the matter I agreed out of my own accord to land my wife.

Mos. Sir, I assure you that I shall tell all this so that all the other greedy candidates for his wealth may be completely routed and you alone may be the successor. But do not come to my master's house before I send for you because I have got some o her plan to hasten the fulfilment of your desire which of course I should not disclose to you.

Corv. But do not forget to send for me soon.

Mos. Do not have any fear on that account. [*Exit.*

Scene VII – Corvino, Celia.

Corv. Where are you my wife, my Celia, my wife?

Re-enter Celia.

What! Are you really sobbing? Come along: wipe out your tears. Did you really take me seriously? By the sunlight, I swear that I talked like that only to test you I think, the very light character of your conduct near the window should have removed all doubt that I was not at all serious. Come along; I am at not all suspicious about you.

Cel. Really you are not suspicious?

Corv. Upon my honour I am not suspicious nor ever I was, it is just a little bit of a whimsical nature. Do I not know that if women went to anything like that (*i. e.* to have an illicit connection with anybody), they can do it in spite of all the strictest watch that can be kept over them; and do I not know that all those who keep a watch can be purchased with money? Nonsense! You will soon come to know that I have full faith in you; and I will give you an opportunity to be thoroughly convinced about it. Come, kiss me. Go, get yourself ready immediately; put on your best clothes and also your best ornaments to appear as most attractive We have been invited to attend a grand feast at old Volpone's place, where you will see how I am not in the least suspicious about your character or afraid of any temptation to which you may submit. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I—*A Street.*

Enter Mosca.

Mos I fear, I shall begin to grow in love
With my dear self, and my most prosperous parts,
They do so spring and burgeon ; I can feel
A whimsy in my blood : I know not how,
Success hath made me wanton. I could skip
Out of my skin, now, like a subtle snake,
I am so limber. O ! your parasite
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpoles, here on earth.
I muse, the mystery was not made a science,
It is so liberally profest ! almost
All the wise world is li tle else, in nature,
But parasites or sub-parasites,—And yet,
I mean not those that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them ; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for men's ears, to bait that sense ; or get
Kitchen-invention, and some stale receipts
To please the belly, and the groin ; nor those,
With their court dog-tricks, that can fawn and fleer,
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo my lord, and lick away a moth :
But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise,
And stoop, almost together, like an arrow ;
Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star ;
Turn short as doth a swallow ; and be here,
And there, and here, and yonder, all at once
Present to any humour, all occasion ;
And change a visor, swifter than a thought !
This is the creature had the art born with him ;
Toils not to learn it, but doth practise it
Out of most excellent nature : and such sparks
Are the true parasites, others but their zains.

ACT III.

Scene I—*A Street.*

Enter **Mosca.**

Mos. I am afraid. I am beginning to fall in love with myself because of my successful plans which seem to make my heart leap up and my body swell will pride and joy. I am feeling a kind of excitement in my very blood; and I do not know how my success has made me reckless, so much so, that I could jump out of my body just like a snake that changes its skin. I seem to be quicker than a snake. O, your parasite is a blessed creature which has descended from heaven and born on earth like the fools and the clowns. I think, the occupation of a parasite is not a secret thing like science because it is practised so widely by all people. Almost all the intelligent people are parasites or their followers. And yet I must distinguish the true parasite from those persons who live in the town and visit houses in order to be fed, because they have no family, no home, no responsibility, and therefore, they relate fictitious stories in order to impress those whom they exploit; or from those who fill their belly with the remaants of food which are generally available for the servants: or from those who are courtiers and who flatter and humour the noblemen with their most servile manners and words such as kneeling down before them, seeking the smiles of their patrons, dittoing whatever their masters speak or do, and last of all, doing all sorts of menial jobs for their patrons. But a true parasite is he who is polished and refined in his ways and manners, who can obey and command at the same time, who can most promptly act just as a star can shoot through the air or just as a swallow can dart and stop short in its flight, who can make himself homely in every society, who can adjust himself to any kind of atmosphere and who can change his looks, mood and words quicker than any thought. Such is the nature of a true parasite who does not learn but is born with the art of behaving as a parasite being prompted by nature herself, while all others who claim to be parasites are but imitators.

Secne II—Mosca

Enter **Bonario.**

Who's this ? Bonario, old Corbaccio's son ?
The person I was bound to seek.—Fair sir,
You are happily met.
Bon. That cannot be by thee.
Mos. Why, sir ?
Bon. Nay, pray thee, know thy way, and leave me :
I would be loth to interchange discourse
With such a mate as thou art.
Mos. Courteous sir,
Scorn not my poverty.
Bon. Not I, by heaven ;
But thou shalt give me leave to hate thy baseness.
Mos. Baseness !
Bon. Ay ; answer me, is not thy sloth
Sufficient argument ? thy flattery ?
Thy means of feeding ?
Mos. Heaven be good to me !
These imputations are too common, sir,
And easily stuck on virtue when she's poor.
You are unequal to me, and however
Your sentence may be righteous, yet you are not
That, ere you know me, thus proceed in censure :
St. Mark bear witness 'gainst you, 'it is inhuman. [*Weeps.*
Bon. What ! does he weep ? the sign is soft and good ;
I do repent me that I was so harsh [*Aside.*
Mos. 'Tis true, that, sway'd by strong necessity,
I am enforced to eat my careful bread.
With too much obsequy ; 'tis true, beside.
That I am fain to spin mine own poor raiment.
Out of my mere observance, being not born.
To a free fortune : but that I have done.
Base offices, in rending friends asunder,
Dividing families, betraying counsels,
Whispering false lies, or mining men with praises,
Train'd their credulity with prejuries,
Corrupted chastity, or am in love
With mine own tender ease, but would not rather.
Prove the most rugged, and laborious course,

Scene II—Mosca.

Enter **Bonario.**

Who is that ? Is that Bonario, son of old Corbaccio for whom I was actually looking ? Gentle sir, you have come at the right moment.

Bon. You could not be looking for me.

Mos. Why not, sir ?

Bon. No, please follow your own way and let me alone ; I would be unwilling to talk to a man like you.

Mos. Gentle sir, do not hate me on account of my poverty

Bon. In the name of God, I do not hate you on that account; but you should allow me to have your meanners.

Mos. My meanness ?

Bon. Yes ; tell me if your laziness (having no occupation), your habit of falsely praising people is not the means of earning your livelihood ?

Mos. May God be just or kind to me ? The charges you are making, sir, are generally found even in the virtuous people if they are poor. You are unjust to me ; and however your charge may be justified, you should not have accused me like that without knowing me. May Saint Mark (patron saint of Venice) hear your unjust accusation against me. [*Weeps*

Bon. What ? Does he really weep ? He seems to have a soft and good heart. I regret that I have been rather rude or unkind to him. [*Aside.*

Mos. It is true that under a painful necessity I am compelled to earn my bread with hard labour and suffering all sorts of humiliation ; it is true also that as I am not born independent I have to exist in the world by humouring others ; but let me die in the hope of my salvation in the other world if I have committed any of the mean acts such as sowing enmity between friends, separating the members of the family, disclosing secrets (or disregarding good advice), relating false stories (or telling lies), degracing people with flattery, exploiting the credulity of people with false rumours, seducing virtuous women or indulging

That might redeem my present estimation,
Let me here perish, in all hope of goodness.

Bon. This cannot be a personated passion.— [*Aside.*
I was to blame, so to mistake thy nature ?
Prithee, forgive me: and speak out thy business.

Mos. Sir, it concerns you ; and though I may seem,
At first to make a main offence in manners ;
And in my gratitude unto my master ;
Yet, for the pure love. which I bear all right,
And hatred of he wrong, I must reveal it.
This very hour your father is in purpose.
To disinherit you –

Bon. How !

Mos And thrust you forth,
As a mere stranger to his blood ; 'tis true, sir,
The work no way engageth me, but, as
I claim an interest in the general state
Of goodness and true virtue, which I hear,
To abound in you : for which mere respect,
Without a second aim, sir, I have done it.

Bon This tale hath lost thee much of the late trust
Thou hadst with me ; it is impossible :
I know not how to lend it any thought,
My father should be so unnatural.

Mos. It is a confidence that well becomes,
Your piety ; and form'd, no doubt, it is
From your own simple innocence : which makes
Your wrong more monstrous and abhorr'd. But, sir,
I now will tell you more. This very minute,
It is, or will be doing ; and, if you
Shall be but pleased to go with me, I'll bring you,
I dare not say where you shall see, but where
Your ear shall be a witness of the deed ;
Hear yourself written bastard, and profest
The common issue of the earth.

in idleness and thereby avoiding a life of hard labour which might create a better opinion about me in others. [*Aside*

Bon. All this cannot be pretended emotions. I was really wrong to misjudge your character; please forgive me, and tell me what you wanted to speak.

Mos. Sir, the matter concerns you. Though I may appear in the beginning to commit some breach of etiquette and also disloyalty to my master yet purely out of love and regards for the right and hatred for the wrong I must disclose the matter to you. This very moment your father is proposing to disinherit you from your rights of his property.

Bon. How do you say that ?

Mos. He (your father) proposes to deprive you of the inheritance as if you were a mere stranger to him. It is true that although I have nothing to do with your inheritance yet I am interested in the welfare of the really good and virtuous people, and I understand that you are one of such persons ; and it is out of this regard only without any other motive that I have disclosed the secret to you.

Bon. This statement of yours (that my father is going to disinherit me) has ruined my faith (trust) in you which was created just a moment ago (by your tears). It is impossible for my father to disinherit me ; and therefore, I cannot believe such a statement. My father cannot be so unnatural.

Mos. You have so much faith in your father simply because you are a virtuous man, and also because you are a very innocent soul owing to which you consider your father's action as something impossible, inconceivable, and most hateful even to think of. But, sir, I will now disclose to you something more. If you are willing to follow me, I shall take you to such a place from where you will not be able to see anything but hear the truth of my statement. You will hear with your own ears how you are mentioned in the will of your father as an illegitimate son, and as such, a disinherited child.

Bon. I am amazed !

Mos. Sir if I do not, draw your just sword,
And score your vengeance on my front and face ;
Mark me your villain : you have too much wrong,
And I do suffer for you, sir, My heart
Weeps in anguish— [*Exeunt.*

Bon. Lead ; I follow thee.

Scene III.—*A Room in* Volpone's *House.*

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. Mosca stays long, methinks.—Bring forth your sports,
And help to make the wretched time more sweet.

Enter NANO, ANDROGYNO, and CASTRONE.

Nan, *Dwarf, fool, and eunuch well met here we be.*
A question it were now, whether of us three.
Being all the known delicates of a rich man,
In pleasing him, claim the precedencp can ?

Cas. *I claim for myself.*

And. *And so doth the fool.*

Nan. *'Tis foolish indeed : let me set you both to school.*
First for your dwarf, he's little and witty
And every thing, as it is little, is pretty ;
Else why do men say to a creature of my shape,
So soon as they see him, it's a pretty little ape ?
And why a pretty ape, but for pleasing imitation
Of greater men's actions, in a ridiculous fashion ?
Beside, this feat body of mine doth not crave
Half the meat, drink, and cloth, one of your bulks will have.
Admit your fool's face be the mother of laughter,
Yet, for his brain, it must always come after :
And though that do feed him, it's a pitiful case
His body is beholding to such a bad face.
[Knocking within.

Bon. I am really astonished.

Mos. Sir, if I cannot prove the truth of my statement, you can draw your sword, take your revenge, and cut my face to pieces, and also declare me a villain (knave . A great wrong has been done to you, and I bitterly feel for you ; my heart is actually bleeding in sorrow—

Bon. Then lead me, and I will follow you. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III—*A Room in* Volpone's *House.*

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. I am afraid, Mosca is keeping away too long. Get me your entertainments and let me forget the tedium of the hour.

Enter **Nano, Androgyno and Castrone.**

Nan. Dwarf, fool and eunuch—we have met here rightly. Let us decide the question which amongst us is the greattest favourite of our master when we know that all of us three are equally the means of entertainment to him.

Cas. I claim to be the greatest favourite.

And. So the fool also claims himself to be.

Nan. The claims of both of you are foolish (wrong) ; let me decide the quarrel. First of all, so far the dwarf is concerned, he is short in size and humorous. Everything, whatever is small, is regarded as beautiful ; otherwise when people have to look at a small creature like me why should they call him a beautiful monkey unless he knows how to mimic (imitate) the ways of the bigger people in a funny manner ? Then again, this small body of mine does not require so much of food, drink or clothes as one of your size (dimension) would require. Taking for granted that a fool's face is the source of laughter to other people but then, his brain (intelligence) is inferior to his face ; and although by his laughable face the fool earns his living yet it is really sad that his whole body should be subordinate (inferior) to his face. [*Knocking within.*

Volp. Who's there ? my couch ; away ! look ! Nano, see :
[*Exe. And. and Cas.*
Give me my caps, first—go, enquire. [*Exit Nano.*]
—Now, Cupid
Send it be Mosca, and with fair return !
Nan. [*Within*] It is the beauteous madam—
Volp. Would-be—is it ?
Nan. The same.
Volp. Now torment on me ! Squire her in :
For she will enter, or dwell here for ever :
Nay, quickly. [*Retires to his couch.*] —That my fit were past ! I fear
A second hell too, that my lothing this
Will quite expel my appetite to the other :
Would she were taking now her tedious leave.
Lord, how it threats me what I am to suffer !

Scene IV—*Re-enter* **Nano,** *with* **Lady Politick Would-be.**

Lady P. I thank you, good sir. 'pray you signify
Unto your patron, I am here.—This band
Shews not my neck enough—I trouble you, sir ;
Let me request you, bid one of my women,
Come hither to me.—In good faith, I am drest
Most favouraby to-day ! It is no matter :
'Tis well enough.—

Enter I Waiting-woman

Look, see, these petulant things,
How they have done this !
Volp. I do feel the fever
Entering in at mine ears ; O, for a charm,
To fright it hence ! [*Aside.*
Lady P. Come nearer : is this curl
In his right place, or this ? Why is this higher
Than all the rest ? You have not wash'd your eyes yet !
Or do they not stand even in your head ?
Where is your fellow ? call her [*Exit I Woman*
Nan. Now, St. Mark
Deliver us ! anon, she'll beat her women,
Because her nose is red.

Volp. Who is knocking at the door? Let me have my couch (where I must lie down in order to pretend sickness). Get away trom here, you people. Nano, just see who is actually knocking at the door.

(*Exeunt* **And.** *and* **Cas.**)

Let me have my caps, first of all;—you better go and see who is knocking at the door. (*Exit* **Nano**). It is Cupid (god of love) who has sent Lady Would-be, and not Celia would have been brought by Mosca.

Nan. (*Within*) It is the beautiful lady—

Volp. Is it the Lady Would-be?

Nan. Yes, sir.

Volp. She will be a torture to me. Bring her here. She will enter here......forcibly, and stay also the longest. No, bring her immediately (*Retires to his couch*)—so that my torture may be over soon. She is a regular hell to me. My hatred for her would drive away my liking for Celia. I wish, she had taken leave of me sooner. Good God how she threatens to torture me by her very presence?

Scene IV—*Re-enter* **Nano,** *with* **Lady Politick Would-be.**

Lady P. Thank you, gentle, sir. Please tell me that you have not minded my presence here. This band (some piece of cloth or collar) does not sufficiently expose my neck. I am troubling you a little, sir; will you please ask somebody to fetch one of my attendant women? I am sure, I am dressed quite attractively. It does not matter, it is good enough.

Enter 1 Waiting-woman.

Just see how the tailor or the washerman has made these things most annoying.

Volp. I feel a sort of great uneasiness when I listen to the voice of Lady Would-be. I wish, some charm could have removed this woman from my presence. [*Aside.*

Lady P. Come closer; is this or that curl in its proper place? Why is this (curl shooting up higher than all the other ones (curls)? You have not washed your eyes (*i.e.* your vision is not clear) or are not your eyes rightly set in your head? Where is the other woman? Call her. [*Exit 1Woman.*

Nan. Now, we appeal to St. Mark to save us from the hands of this lady; her red nose indicates that she is very, angry, and so, she will beat her attendant-woman.

Re-enter 1 *with* 2 Women.

Lady P. I pray you, view
This tire, forsooth : are all things apt, or no ?

I *Wom.* One hair a lit le, here, sticks out, forsooth.

Lady P. Does't so, forsooth ! and where was your dear sight,
When it did so, fotsooth ! What now ! bird-eyed ?
And you too ? 'Pray you, both approach and mend it.
Now, by that light, I muse you are not ashamed !
I, that have preach'd these things so oft unto you,
Read you the principles, argued all the grounds,
Disputed every fitness, every grace,
Call'd you to counsel of so frequent dressings—

Nan. More carefully than of your fame or honour. [*Aside.*

Lady P. Made you acquainted, what an ample dowry
The knowledge of these things would be unto you,
Able, alone, to get you noble husbands
At your return : and you thus to neglect it !
Besides you seeing what a curious nation
The Italians are, what will they say of me ?
The English lady cannot dress herself.
Here's a fine imputation to our country !
Well, go your ways, and stay in the next room,
This fucus was too coarse too ; it's no matter,—
Good sir, you'll give them entertainment ?
[*Exeunt* Nano *and Waiting-women.*

Volp. The storm comes toward me.

Lady P. [*goes to the couch.*] How does my Volpone ?

Volp. Troubled with noise, I cannot sleep ; I dreamt
That a strange fury enter'd, now, my house,
And, with the dreadful tempest of her breath,
Did cleave my roof asunder.

Lady P. Believe me, and I
Had the most fearful dream, could I remember 't—

Volp. Out on my fate ! I have given her the occasion
How to torment me : she will tell me her's. [*Aside.*

Lady P. Methought, the golden mediocrity,

Re-enter I with 2 woman.

Lady P. Please look at this tire (head-dress) and see if everything is in perfect order.

I Wom. One hair seems to shoot here, I think.

Lady P. Does it really so? Why did not you see it when the hair shot out like that? Are you half-blind like a bird. And what about your eyes, you second woman? Are you half-blind like a bird? Please both of you draw near and set the hair right. I am sure, you don't feel ashamed of your negligence. I have given you so many instructions; I have quoted so many rules; I have given you so many arguments; and I have also explained to you on so many occasions all the rules of dressing—

Nan. You have been more careful about your dress than your character or reputation. [*Aside*

Lady P. I told you clearly how all this knowledge of dressing would bring you a good reward in the form of good husbands; and yet it is strange that you have neglected all my advice. Then again, you know how particular these Italians are about their dress; what will they think of me? They will say that an English lady does not know how to dress herself. What a fine compliment to our country indeed. Well, go away from here and wait in the adjacent room. This make-up (personal decoration) was really most unrefined, and yet it should not matter—good sir, you will keep them engaged with some fun.

[*Exeunt* Nano *and Waiting-woman.*

Volp. The storm (Lady Would-be) is approaching me.

Lady P. (*goes to the couch*). How is my Volpone feeling now?

Volp. I cannot have any sleep because I am disturbed by noise. Just now I was having a dream that a terrible storm (fury) entered my house and with its blast rent to pieces my entire house.

Lady P. To speak the truth, I also had a very terrible dream; but I cannot recollect it—

Volp. Curse upon my fate; I have given her the opportunity to torture me, she will now relate her dream. [*Aside.*

Lady P. I thought, the rule of the golden mean, politeness and sense of decency—

Polite and delicate—
Volp. O, if you do love me,
No more: I sweat, and suffer, at the mention
Of any dream; feel how I tremble yet.
Lady P. Alas, good soul! the passion of the heart.
Seed-pearl were good now, boil'd with syrup of apples,
Tincture of gold, and coral, citron-pills,
Your elicampane root, myrobalanes—
Volp. Ah me, I have ta'en a grass-hopper by the wing! [*Aside.*
Lady P. Burnt silk, and amber: You have muscadel
Good in the house—
Volp. You will not drink, and part?
Lady P. No, fear not that. I doubt, we shall not get
Some English saffron half a dram would serve;
Your sixteen cloves, a little musk, dried mints,
Bugloss, and barley-meal—
Volp. She's in again!
Before I feign'd diseases now I have one. [*Aside.*
Lady P. And these applied with a right scarlet cloth.
Volp. Another flood of words! a very torrent! [*Aside.*
Lady P. Shall I, sir, make you a poultice?
Volp. No, no, no,
I'm very well, you need prescribe no more.
Lady P. I have a little studied physic, but now,
I'm all for music, save, in the forenoons,
An hour or two for painting. I would have
A lady, indeed, to have all, letters and arts,
Be able to discourse, to write, to paint,
But principal, as Plato holds, your music,
Is your true rapture: when there is concent
In face, in voice, and clothes; and is, indeed,
Our sex's chiefest ornament.

Volp. O, if you have any love for me, please do not talk anymore. I perspire, and feel tortured at the very name of a dream; just see how I am trembling at this moment.

Lady P. Alas, gentle soul, for the cure of the heart burning I would like to prescribe a mixture of seed-pearls boiled with the apple syrup, with a touch of liquid gold, coral, lemon pills, and also some herb root and dried fruit grown in the tropical countries—

Volp. Alas! I have caught hold of Lady Would-be by her tail, and that is why she is talking more just as a grass-hopper when taken by the wing buzzes all the more loudly. [*Aside.*

Lady P. And also burnt silk and fossil resin; you have, I am sure, a rich sweet wine in your house—

Volp. Will you drink that wine and depart from here?

Lady P. Do not fear that. I am not sure if we can secure English saffron (an orange colour flower); a little quantity of it would serve the purpose. Sixteen cloves, a little musk, dried mints, bugloss and barley-meal may also serve the purpose—

Volp. She has again started talking. Formerly, I pretended to have diseases but now I am actually suffering from some disease. [*Aside.*

Lady P. And these substances should be applied with a piece of red cloth.

Volp. Another volume of words; a regular stream! [*Aside.*

Lady P. Should I prepare a plaster for you?

Volp. No, surely not. I am perfectly fit; you need not prescribe anymore medicine.

Lady P. I have studied a little bit of the medical science but now I am interested in music except in the forenoon when I am interested in painting. I would like to have the company of a lady who is versed in literature and fine arts and who can talk and write and paint, but mainly, who can sing just as Plato gives the highest place to music. Pythagoras also gives the same place to music. You must also be interested in it. When there is harmony in the voice, in the face and in the clothes, it forms an attractive element in a woman.

Volp. The poet
As old in time as Plato, and as knowing,
Says, that your highest female grace is silence.
Lady P. which of your poets ? Petrarch, or Tasso, or Dante ?
Guarini ? Ariosto ? Aretine ?
Cieco di Hadria I have read them all.
Volp. Is everything a cause to my destruction ? [*Aside.*
Lady P. I think I have two or three of them about me.
Volp. The sun, the sea, will sooner both stand still
Than her eternal tongue ! nothing can ' scape it [*Aside.*
Lady P. Here's Pastor Fido—
Volp. Profess obstinate silence ;
That's now my safest. [*Aside.*
Lady P. All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out steal out of this author, mainly :
Almost as much as from Montaigne :
He has so modern and facile a vein,
Fitting the time, and catching the court-ear !
Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he,
In days of sonnetting, trusted them with much :
Dante is hard, and few can understand him.
But, for a desperate wit, there's Aretine ;
Only, his pictures are a little obscene—
You mark me not.
Volp. Alas, my mind's perturb'd.
Lady P. Why, in such cases, we must cure ourselves,
Make use of our philosophy—
Volp. Oh me !
Lady P. And as we find our passions do rebel,
Encounter them with reason, or divert them.
By giving scope unto some other humour
Of lesser danger : as, in politic bodies,
There's nothing more doth overwhelm the judgment
And cloud the understanding, than too much
Settling and fixing, and, as 'twere, subsiding

Volp. Sophocles, the poet of Plato's time says that the greatest mark of attraction in a woman is her silence.

Lady P. Which of the poets you mean—Petrarch or Tasso or Dante or Guarini or Ariosto or Aretine or Cieco of Hadria ? I am acquainted with them all.

Volp. Will everything whatever I shall talk tempt her to talk further and thereby torture me? [*Aside.*

Lady P. I think, I possess the works of two or three of the above-mentioned poets.

Volp. Even the sun and the sea will stop their movement but Lady Would-be will never stop. Nothing can stop her tongue. [*Aside.*

Lady P. Here I am quoting from Paster Fide, the work of Guarini.—

Volp. Please maintain perfect silence which is now my best restorative (best medicine).

Lady P. All our English writers whoever are acquainted with the Italian language will borrow some words from this poet (Guarini) as much as from Montaigne (a French essayist). Montaigne writes in a style which attracts the modern readers as much as the ears of the courtiers. Petrarch's writing excite the passion of the readers ; but then, he provided much of the writing material to the English poets who composed sonnets. Dante is difficult to follow, and that is why, few can borrow material from him. But for a bold writer or reader, Aretine, the notorious writer of obscene ›onnets was quite ready or enough. But you are not listening to me.

Volp. Alas, my mind is very much disturbed.

Lady P. In cases of mental disturbance, we shall have to cure it ourselves by using some of the philosophical doctrines or rules—

Volp. Alas. I am ruined (because of Lady Would-be's continuous talking).

Lady P. When we find our baser instincts going to revolt, the best way of overpowering them is to exercise reason or to drive them through the channel of some other instinct which is less harmful, just as in the discussions of a debating body, there is no end of discussions, and there is a confusion of the powers of understanding and judgment leading to settlement of a problem or question

Upon one object. For the incorporating
Of these same outward things, into that part,
Which we call mental, leaves some certain faces
That stop the organs, and as Plato says,
Assassinate out knowledge.
Volp. Now, the spirit
Of patience help me ! [*Aside.*
Lady P. Come, in faith, I must
Visit you more a days ; and make you well :
Laugh and be busty.
Volp. My good angel save me ! [*Aside.*
Lady P. There was but one sole man in all the world,
With whom I e'er could sympathise ; and he
Would lie you, often, three, four hours together
To hear me speak ; and be sometimes so rapt.
As he would answer me quite from the purpose,
Like you, and you are like him, just I'll discourse.
An't be but only, sir, to bring you asleep,
How we did spend our time and loves together,
For some six years.
Volp. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh !
Lads P. For we were coaetanei, and brought up—
Volp. Some power, some fate, some fortune rescue me !

Scene V—Lady Politick. Volpone.
Enter Mosca

Mos. God save you, madam !
Lady P. Good sir.
Volp. Mosca ! welcome,
Weleome to my redemption.
Mos. Why, sir ?
Volp. Oh,
Rid me of this my torture, quickly, there ;
My madam, with the everlasting voice :
The bells, in time of pestilence ne'er made
Like noise, or were in that perpetual motion '
The Cock-pit comes not near it. All my house,
A lawyer could not have been heard ; nor scarce
But now, steam'd like a bath with her thick breath;
Another woman, such a hail of words
She has let fall. For hell's shake, rid her hence.

unless all the discussions are diverted to some other subject or question. In order to harmonise the external things with our mental process, we generally have a sort of clogging of our mental functions, and thereby block all the passages for acquiring knowledge, as Plato says.

Volp. Now, let my patience (tolerance) alone save me (from Lady Would-be's noisy tongue.) (*Aside.*

Lady P. At any cost, I must visit you more frequently and thereby restore you to health and make you cheerful and active.

Volp. May my guardian angel save me from Lady Would-be. [*Aside.*

Lady P. There was only one man in the whole world with whom I could agree (or whom I used to love); and he used to remain in my company for hours together in order to listen to my talks ; he used to listen to me very attentively and also answer to my questions to the point as you do, he was like you as you are like him. I will talk about him just to put you into sleep how we used to spend out time and love each other for six years.

Volp. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh !

Lady P. We were born together and also brought up together.

Volp. May some power, some agent of God, some star come to my help.

Scene V—Lady Politick, Volpone.
Enter **Mosca**

Mos. May God bless pou madam.

Lady P. Thank you, sir.

Volp. Mosca, you have come at the right moment to save me.

Mos. Why, sir ?

Volp. Please save me from the hands of this most boring lady, who is sitting there and has been torturing me with her most talkative tongue. Even the alarm bells in times of some great disaster do not ring so persistently nor do the low class visitors to the theatre make such a great noise as she has been making. As the result of her noise, my house has been steaming with foul breath of her mouth, and no other woman or even a lawyer could ever be so loud and talkative as this lady. For the sake of the devil, please save me from her hands.

Mos. Has she presented ?
Volp. O, I do not care ;
I'll take her absence, upon any price,
With any loss.
Mos. Madam—
Lady P. I have brought your patron
A toy, a cap here, of mine own work.
Mos. 'Tis well.
I had forgot to tell you, I saw your knight
Where you would little think it.—
Lady P. Where ?
Mos. Marry,
Where yet, if pou make haste, you may apprehend
Rowing upon the water in a gondole
With the most cunning courtezan of Venice.
Lady P. Is't true ?
Mos. Pursue them, and believe your eyes :
Leave me, to make your gift. [*Exit Lady P. hastily.*]—
I know 'twould take :
For, lightly, they that use themselves most, license,
Are still most jealous.
Volp. Mosca, hearty thanks,
For thy quick fiction, and delivery of me.
Now to my hopes, what say'st thou ?

Re-enter **Lady P. Would-be.**

Lady P. But do you hear, sir ?—
Volp. Again ! I fear a paroxysm.
Lady P. Which way.
Row'd they together ?
Mos. Toward the Rialto.
Lady P I pray you lend me your dwarf.
Mos. I pray you take him.— [*Exit Lady P.*
Your hopes, sir, are like happy blossoms, fair,
And promise timely fruit, if you will stay
But the maturing ; keep you at your couch,
Corbaccio will arrive straight, with the Will ;
When he is gone, I'll tell you more. [*Exit.*

Mos. Has she given you any present ?
Volp. O I do not care for her present. I am prepared to suffer any loss and to pay any price in orher to get rid of her from here.
Mos. Madam.........
Lady P. I have brought for your master a toy and a cap prepared by me.

Mos. It is good. But I forgot to tell you that I saw your husband at a place where you would least expect him to be.

Lady P. Where ?
Mos. Surely at a place, where you can find him, enjoying in a pleasure boat, the company of one of the most cunning prostitutes of Venice, if you quickly run away from here and pursue them.
Lady P. Is it really a fact ?
Mos. Just follow them and you will see everything with your own eyes. Then leave your gift for my master.
[*Exit* **Lady P**.

I knew that this trick would work upon her, because those who are licentious themselves are generally most suspicious.

Volp. Mosca, I thank you most sincerely for your clever lie and my delivery from the hands of the lady. Now let me know what hopes I have for getting Celia.

Re-enter **Lady P. Would-be**

Lady P. But do you listen to me, sir ?
Volp. Again she is appearing ; I am afraid, new fits of torture will now come upon me.

Lady P. Which way they went in their boat ?
Mos. Towards the Rialto (a bridge across the Great Canal in Venice). [*Exit* **Lady P**.
Lady P. Please ask your dwarf to accompany me.
Mos. Please you take him. [*Exit* **Lady P**.

Your hopes, sir, are quite bright like good blossoms that bear fruit in due course of time, if you wait patiently for its blossoming (*i. e.* the opportunity arrives). Keep yourself confined to your couch ; Corbaccio will come here immediately with his Will ; and when he has gone away again, I shall tell you the whole thing. [*Exit*.

Volp. My blood,
My spirits are return'd ; I am alive :
And like your wanted gamester at primero,
Whose thought had whisper'd to him not go less.
Methinks I lie, and draw—foe an encounter.

The scene closes upon **Volpone.**

Scene IV. *The Passage leading to* **Volpone's** *Chamber.*

Enter **Mosca** *and* **Bonario.**

Mos. Sir, here conceal'd, [*shews him a closet*]. You may hear all. But, Pray you,
Have patience, sir ; [*knocking within*]—the same's your father knocks :
I am compell'd to leave you. [*Exit.*

Bon. Do so.—Yet
Cannot my thought imagine this a truth.

[*Goes into the closet.*

Scene VII—*Another Part of the Same.*

Bonario, Volpone.

Enter **Mosca** *and* **Corvino, Celia** *following.*

Mos. Death on me ! you are come too soon, what meant you ?
Did not I say, I would send ?

Corv. Yes, but I fear'd
You might forget it, and then they prevent us.

Mos. Prevent ! did e'er man haste so, for his horns ?
A courtier would not ply it so, for a place. [*Aside*
Well, now there is no helping it, stay here ;
I'll presently return. [*Exit.*

Corv. Where are you, Celia ?
You know not wherefore I have brought you hither ?

Cel. Not well, except you told me.

Corv. Now, I will :
Hark hither. [*Exeunt.*

Volp. My youth and cheerfulness have come back to me, and I feel quite healthy again. Just like that reckless gambler who is bent upon staking a big amount, I am also lying here in my couch banking on my expectations in order to meet Celia.

[*The scene closes upon* **Volpone**.

Scene VI—*The Passage leading to* **Volpone's** *Chamber.*

Enter **Mosca** *and* **Bonario.**

(*shows him a closet*)

Mos. Sir, hide yourself here ; you will be able to hear everything ; but please hold your patience, sir, (*knocking within*). It is your father knocking, I am obliged to leave you, sir. [*Exit.*

Bon. Yes, you can leave ; but I cannot believe it to be true. [*Goes into the closet.*

Scene VII—*Another Part of the Same.*

Enter **Mosca** *and* **Corvino, Celia,** *following.*

Mos. I am undone, why have you come too early ? Did not I tell you that I would send for you ?

Corv. That's true, but I feared that you might forget to send for me, and then, our interest would have been ruined by them.

Mos. Ruined by them ? Did ever any man on earth hasten so much to lend his wife to another person ? Even a courtier would not hasten things in this manner in order to win some favour (of the king or the queen). (*Aside*) Well, there is no help for it. Please keep on waiting here ; I shall soon be coming back. [*Exit.*

Corv. Where are you, Celia ? Do you know why I have brought you here ?

Cel. No, not more than what you have already told me.

Corv. Now, I will tell you ; listen to me. [*Exeunt.*

(*A Closet opening into a Gallery*)

Enter **Mosca** *and* **Bonario**.

Mos. Sir, your father hath sent word,
It will be half an hour ere he come ;
And therefore, if you please to walk the while
Into that gallery—at the upper end,
There are some books to entertain the time :
And I'll take care no man shall come unto you, sir,

Bon. Yes, I will stay there.—I do doubt this fellow. [*Aside, and exit.*

Mos. [*looking after him.*] There ; he is far enough ; he can hear nothing :
And, for his father, I can keep him off. [*Exit,*

Volpone's *Chamber*—**Volpone** *on his couch.*
Mosca *sitting by him.*

Enter **Corvino,** *forcing in* **Celia.**

Corv. Nay, now, there is no starting back, and therefore,
Resolve upon it : I have so decreed.
It must be done. Nor would I move't afore,
Because I would avoid all shifts and tricks,
That might deny me.

Cel. Sir, let me beseech you,
Affect not these strange trails ; if you doubt
My chastity, why, lock me up for ever ;
Make me the heir of darkness. Let me live,
Where I may please your fears, if not your trust.

Corv. Believe it, I have no such humour, I.
All that I speak I mean ; yet I'am not mad ;
Nor born-mad, see you ? Go to, shew yourself
Obedient, and a wife.

Cel. O heaven !

Covr. I say it,
Do so.

Cel. Was this the train ?

(*A Closet opening into a Gallery.*)
Enter **Mosca** *and* **Bonario**

Mos. Sir, your father has sent a message that it will take him half an hour more to come here ; and therefore if you like, you can step into that upper end of the gallery where there are some books to keep you engaged ; and I will see that nobody comes to disturb you.

Bon. Yes, I shall wait there—I doubt the truth of this fellow's words. [*Aside and exit.*

Mos. (*looking after him*). He is quite away from here, and therefore, he cannot hear anything. So far his father is concerned, I will prevent him from meeting his son. [*Exit.*

Volpone's *Chamber* **Volpone** *on his couch.*
Mosca, *sitting by him.*
Enter **Corvino** *forcing in* **Celia**.

Corv. Now, there is no going back ; and therefore, you have to make up your mind. I have so arranged or ordered that it must be obeyed or carried out. I will not show anyway that I am forcing you or applying any tricks upon you because otherwise I may be deprived of the chance of being apppointed the successor (to Volpone).

Cel. Let me entreat you, sir, do not pretend to make a show of testing my character in this manner. If you have any suspicion about my character, you can put me into chains (shut me up in your house) for ever, and keep me as a prisoner in a dark cell. Let me rather live and create fear if not distrust about my character.

Corv. To speak the truth, I am not in any such mood. What I speak to you I want to do or carry out. But then, I am not mad or even a cuckold as you or anybody may take me for. I can't wait anymore. Obey my orders, go inside the room and behave like a wife to Volpone.

Cel. Good gracious ! What do you say ?

Corv. Do just as I say.

Cel. Was this the trap or the jest of my character ? (or was this the reason why you brought me here ?)

Corv. I've told you reasons :
What the physicians have set down : how much
It may concern me ; what my engagements are ;
My means ; and the necessity of those means,
For my recovery : wherefore, if you be
Loyal, and mine, be won, respect my venture.

Cel. Before your honour ?

Corv. Honour ! tut, a breath ;
There's no such thing in nature : a mere term
Invented to awe fools. What is my gold
The worse for touching, clothes for being look'd on ?
Why, this is no more. An old decrepit wretch,
That has no sense, no sinew ; takes his meat
When you do scald his gums ; a voice, a shadow ;
And, what can this man hurt you ?

Cel. Lord ! what spirit
Is this hath enter'd him ? [*Aside.*

Corv. And for your fame,
That's such a jig ; as if I would go tell it,
Cry it on the Piazza ! who shall know it,
But he that cannot speak it, and this fellow,
Whose lips are in my pocket ? save yourself,
(If you'll proclaim 't, you may,) I know no other
Shall come to know it.

Cel. Are heaven and saints them nothing ?
Will they be blind or stupid ?

Corv. How

Cel. Good sir,
Be jealous still, emulate them ! and think
What hate they burn with toward every sin.

Corv. I have explained to you the reasons—what the doctors have prescribed for his recovery (Volpone's restoration to health); how vitally my interest is connected with Volpone (as a successor to his wealth and property); what plans I have hatched; what resources I possess for executing my plans. If you are loving and obedient to me, you should submit to my wishes for the success of my undertaking (plan).

Cel. Do you prize wealth and property above my or your honour?

Corv. Honour is all nonsense; it is as empty or shortlived as the human breath; in the kingdom of nature, there is no such thing as honour (or dishonour); it is merely a word to frighten the foolish or ignorant persons. Do you mean to say that gold is spoilt by mere touching, or clothes are soiled by more gazing? Honour also cannot be lost if you merely play the wife to Volpone Volpone is an old crippled creature, who has no power of sensibility, no energy in his limbs; he cannot even take his food with his own hand; he only knows how to open his mouth to receive his food; he can only cry if his mouth is burnt with any hot food or drink; he is as good as a shadow; what injury can he do you (even if you lie with him)?

Cel. Good God! What kind of an evil spirit has possessed him (Corvino). [*Asied*.

Corv. As for your reputation, no fuss should be made about it; because I am not going to give publicity to it (your surrender to Volpone) in the public square known as the Piazza. Nobody is going to know of it; and if any body comes to know of it he cannot speak it out; because this fellow (Mosca) alone knows it; but then, he is completely under control. Except yourself nobody can speak it out or come to know of it.

Cel. Do you mean to say that there is no saintly or virtuous person in this world? Are they all fools or blind creatures that they will not notice this action of mine or pass some judgment upon it?

Corv. How?

Cel. Gentle sir, be rather suspicious about my character and try to follow the guidance of heaven and the saints; and just consider what hatred and anger they will have towards an evil act (like my surrender to Volpone).

Corv. I grant you : if I thought it were a sin,
I would not urge you. Should I offer this
To some young Frenchman, or hot Tuscan blood
That had read Aretine, conn'd all his prints,
Knew every quick within lust's labyrinth,
And were professed critic in lechery ;
And I would look upon him, and applaud him,
This were a sin : but here, 'tis contrary.
A pious work. mere chairty of physic.
And honest polity, to assure mine own.

Cel. O heaven ! canst thou suffer such a change ?

Volp. Thou art mine honour, Mosca, and my pride,
My joy, my tickling, my delight ! Go bring them.

Mos. [*advancing.*] Please you draw near, sir.

Corv. Come on, what—
You will not be rebellious ? by that light—

Mos. Sir,
Signior Corvino, here, is come to see you.

Volp. Oh !

Mos. And hearing of the consultation had,
So lately for your health, is come to offer,
Or rather, sir, to prostitute—

Corv. Thanks, sweet Mosca.

Mos. Freely, unask'd, or unentreated—

Corv. Well.

Mos. As the true fervent intance of his love,
His own most fair and proper wife ; the beauty,
Only of price in Venice—

Corv. 'Tis well urged.

Mos. To be your comfortress, and to preserve you.

Corv. I would have agreed with you if I regarded this action sinful or evil, and I would not then have urged you to submit to Volpone. If I were to offer my wife to a young Frenchman or a passionate Tuscan who had read the most licentious *Sonetti Lussioriosi* or other works of Aretine or who had known all the secrets of sex or who was a great sexual athelete ; and if I were to praise such a person, it would have been really sinful on my part. But this case is quite different from any vulgar or sinful act ; it is rather an act of charity in the sense that it is meant to restore a crippled fellow to health, and at the same time, to fulfil my interest tactfully (cleverly).

Cel. O God ! Can you really be changed like this ?

Volp. Mosca, you are really the mark of my pride and honour ; you are the source of my joy aad excitement. Go and bring them.

Mos. (*Advancing*). Please get closer to my master, sir.

Corv. Come along. What, won't you come ? Will you disobey me ? In the name of the sun –

Mos. Sir, here is Mr. Corvino come to visit you.

Volp. O, I see !

Mos. On hearing about the medical advice for the restoration of your health he has come to offer you rather to sell to you his—

Carv. Thank you, good Mosca.

Mos. Most generously, unrequested and of his own accord—

Corv. Good.

Mos. As the true token of his love he is offering his own wife, who is the only reputed beauty of Venice.

Corv. You have well recommended my case.

Mos. To give you enjoyment in the bed and thereby restore you to health (or keep you alive).

Volp. Alas, I am past, already ! Pray you, thank him
For his good care and promptness ; but for that,
'Tis a vain labour e'en to fight 'gainst heaven ;
Applying fire to stone—uh, uh, uh, uh ? [*coughing.*]
Making a dead leaf grow again. I take
His wishes gently, though ; and you may tell him,
What I have done for him : marry, may state is hopeless.
Will him to pray for me ; and to use his fortune
With reverence, when he comes to't.

Mos. Do you hear, sir ?
Go to him with your wife.

Corv. Heart of my father !
Wilt thou persist thus ? come, I pray thee, come.
Thou seest 'tis nothing, Celia. By this hand,
I shall grow violent. Come, do't, I say.

Cel. Sir, kill me, rather : I will take down poison,
Eat burning coals, do anything—

Corv. Be damn'd !
Heart, I will drag hence, home, by the hair ;
Cry thee a strumpet through the streets ; rip up
Thy mouth unto thine ears ; and slit by nose,
Like a raw rochet !—Do not tempt me ; come,
Yield, I am loth—Death ! I will buy some slave
Whom I will kill, and bind thee to him, alive ;
And at my window hang you forth, devising
Some monstrous crime, which I, in capital letters,
Will eat into thy flesh with acquafortis,
And burning corsives, on this stubborn breast.
Now, by the blood thou hast incensed, I'll do it !

Cel. Sir, what you please, you may, I am your martyr.

Volp. Alas, I am already dead. But please thank bim on my behalf for his great care of my health and also for his readiness in action (*i.e.* in offering his wife to save my life). As for the offer of his wife's service, it is useless to try to undo the will of God (*i.e.* to restore me to life or health) just as it is useless to try to heat a stone by putting fire to it ; Uh, uh, uh, uh ! (*coughing*) or just like trying to make a dead leaf alive. But I am accepting his good wishes most gratefully Surely, my condition is hopeless. Tell him that I have made him successor. But ask him to pray for my peace in the other world; and tell him also to make use of his wealth and property with due care when he comes to inherit them.

Mos. Do you hear what he says, sir ? Just approach him with your wife.

Corv. In the name of my dead father, will you still be obstinate ? Please come along with me. You see that it is a very simple affair, Celia. By this hand of mine I swear that I shall be violent to you if you refuse to come. I command you.

Cel. Sir, you better kill me. I will better swallow poison or burning charcoal or some such thing (to put an end to my life).

Corv. Be cursed. Upon God, I shall forcibly take you home dragging by the hair, calling you a prostitute most loudly in the streets ; I will tear your mouth right upto your ears, chop your noise like a raw fish called rochet. Do not force me to be violent but come and submit yourself. I am disgusted. I shall purchase some slave and kill him, and then, tie him up along with you before the window of my house in such a manner that the people may understand that you have committed some sex crime with the slave ; and I will print that sex crime on your breast by means of some corrosive substance such at nitric acid. Now, because of the fits of anger you have roused in me, I shall do it.

Cel. Sir, whatever you are pleased to do you can do ; I shall submit to your torture or punishment, and die under that torture.

Corv. Be not thus obstinate, I have not deserved it :
Think who it is entreats you. 'Prithee, sweet ;—
Good faith, thou shalt have jewels, gowns, attires,
What you wilt think. ask. Do but go kiss him,
Or touch him, but. For my sake.—At my suit.—
This once.—No ! not ! I shall remember this.
Will you disgrace me thus ? Do you thirst my undoing ?

Mos. Nay, gentle lady, be advised.

Corv. No, no.
She has watch'd her time Ods precious, this is scurvy,
'Tis very scurvy ; and you are—

Mos. Nay, good sir.

Corv. An arrant locust, by heaven, a locust !
Whore, crocodile, that hast thy tears prepared,
Expecting how thou'lt bid them flow—

Mos. Nay, 'pray you, sir !
She will consider.

Cel. Would my life would serve.
To satisfy—

Corv. S'death ! if she would but speak to him,
And save my reputation, it were somewhat !
But spightfully to affect my utter ruin !
Mos. Ay, now you have put your fortune in her hands.
Why i'faith, it is her modesty, I must quit her.
If you were absent, she would be more coming ;
I know it : and dare undertake for her.
What woman can before her husband ? 'pray you,
Let us depart, and leave her here.

Corv. sweet Celia.
Thou may'st redeem all, yet ; I'll say no more :
If not, esteem yourself as lost. Nay, stay there.
[*Shuts the door, and exit with* Mosca.

Cel. O God, and his good angels ! whither, whither,
Is shame fled human breasts ? that with such case,
Men dare put off your honours, and their own ?
Is that, which ever was a cause of life,
Now placed beneath the basest circumstance,
And modesty an exile made, for money ?

Corv. Do not be so obstinate. I have given you no cause to be obstinate. Please, my darling, I assure you that you will have fine clothes, and whatever you desire to have. Do only go near him (Volpone) and give him a kiss, or even give him your touch, for my sake, and on my request, and for at least once. Won't you do it? I shall never forget your action. Will you dishonour me in this manner? Do you really desire my ruin?

Mos. No, my good lady, be good enough to follow the advice of your husband.

Corv. No, no : she has already exceeded the limit ; it is really very nasty. You are—

Mos. No, gentle sir.

Corv. She is a veritable pest, upon God, a pest, a prostitute, a hypocrite, who has prepared herself for shedding crocodile tears (insincere tears) as much as you will demand.

Mos. No, sir, she will certainly consider your position.

Cel. I am prepared to lose my life if it could serve your purpose—

Corv. Curse upon God! It would have been to some extent good if she merely spoke to Volpone sweetly in order to save my position ; but then, she is maliciously trying to ruin me completely.

Mos. Now that you have surrendered all your fortune to her hand she will do it. I am sure, it is her shyness which is preventing her from it. I must go away from here ; and I know that if you were not present here, she would have done it more willingly. I can tell you on her behalf that a woman cannot do any such thing in presence of her husband. Let us better leave her here.

Corv. Celia, my darling, there is yet time for you to make amends for all. I will not speak any further ; and if you still stick to your will (obstinacy), you will be ruined. No, better remain in the room.

(*Shuts the door, and exit with* Mosca.

Cel. O God and your good agents, where has gone the sense of shame (sense of honour) from the human heart? How do men venture to sacrifice their honour and your honour too? Is honour now placed below every mean thing ; is modesty (chastity) forgotten for the sake of money? Honour used to be formerly the very life-breath of human beings.

Volp. Ay, in Corvino, and such earth-fed minds,
[*Leaping from his couch.*
That never tasted the true heaven of love.
Assure three, Celia, he that would sell thee,
Only for hope of gain, and that uncertain,
He would have sold his part of Paradise
For ready money, had he met a cope-man.
Why art thou mazed to see me thus revived ?
Rather applaud thy beauty's miracle,
'Tis thy great work : that hath, not now alone,
But sundry times raised me, in several shapes,
And, but this morning, like a mountebank,
To see thee at thy window : ay, before
I would have left my practice, for thy love,
In varying figures, I would have contended
With the blue Proteus, or the horned flood.
Now art thou welcome.

Cel. Sir !

Volp. Nay, fly me not.
Nor let thy false imagination
That I was bed rid, make thee think I am so :
Thou shalt not find it. I am, now, as fresh,
As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,
As when, in that so celebrated scene,
At recitation of our comedy,
For entertainment of the great Valois,
I acted young Antinus ; and attracted
The eyes and ears of all the ladies present,
To admire each graceful gesture, note, and footing.
[*Sings.*

Come, my Celia, let us prove,
While we can, the sports of love,
Time will not be ours for ever ;
He, at length, our good will sever !
Spend not then his gifts in vain ;
Suns, that set, may rise again ;
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night,
Why should we defer our joys ?
Fame and rumour are but toys.

Volp. Yes, honour has completely disappeared from mean and lowborn persons like Corvino and such other creatures, who never in their life experienced true love. I can assure you, Celia, that whoever happens to sell your modesty to anybody would be selling his future happiness for the sake of petty money if he could find a purchaser (*i.e.* merchant to buy future happiness or happiness in the other world). (*Leading from his couch*). Are you really surprised to see me suddenly restored to health and life? You should better attribute this unusual phenomenon (this sudden restoration of health) to your own beauty, which has exc ted me not only now but on many other occasions; and which made me put on various guises just as this very morning I put on the guise of a mountebank in order to see you at the window of your house. Formerly, in order to win your love, I would have competed with Proteus (the sea-god who changes his figure at will) and also with Acheleus, the river, that changes her course of tide whenever she likes or like Achilles, who lost one of his horns while fighting with Hercules. Now you are welcome to me.

Cel. Sir! (an expression of fright).

Volp. Do not run away from me nor do think that I am crippled (disabled in body) simply because you found me bedridden (living in bed). You will not find me at all disabled in body. I am now as healthy, energetic and cheerful as I was when I played the role of Antnius, the favourite of Emperor Hadrian, in that magnificent celebration in which I attracted all the ladies present that occasion, who admired my words and gestures at every stop.

[*Sings.*

Come along, Celia, let us enjoy the pleasures of love so long we are alive. Time will not be favourable to us for ever; he will rob us of our joy in the long run. Therefore, do not waste the gifts of God or nature (*i.e.* youth and beauty). The sun sets and rises again; but once we lose our youth, it is lost for ever; and we shall be miserable for ever. Why should we postpone our pleasures? Reputation and rumour are equally empty or short-lived things. Can we not

Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies ?
Or his easier ears beguile,
Thus removed by our wile ?—
'Tis no sin love's fruits to steal :
But the sweet thefts to reveal ;
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

Cel. Some serene blast me, or dire lightning strike,
This my offending face !

Volp. Why droops my Celia ?
Thou hast, in place of a base husband, found
A worthy lover : use thy fortune well,
With secrecy and pleasure. See, behold,
What thou art queen of not, in expectation,
As I feed others : but possess'd and crown'd.
See, here, a rope of pearl ; and each, more orient
Than that the brave Aegyptian queen caroused :
Dissolve and drink them. See, a carbuncle.
May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark ;
A diamond, would have bought Lollia Paulina,
When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels,
That were the spoils of provinces ; take these,
And wear, and lose them : yet remains an ear-ring
To purchase them again, and this whole state.
A gem but worth a private patrimony,
Is nothing : we will eat such at a meal.
The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches,
Shall be our food : and, could we get the phoenix,
Though nature lost her kind, she were our dish.

Cel. Good sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights ; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
And which, once lost I have nought to lose beyond it,
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits ;
It you have conscience—

deceive with some trick the eyes or the ears of the householders who may try to watch us? To enjoy the fruits of love stealthily is no sin but to disclose them or to be detected while enjoying them is regarded as a crime or a sin.

Cel. Some eye-disease should made me blind or some lightning flash burn my face so that it may cease to attract anybody.

Volp. Why should my Celia feel disheartend ? You have discovered a fit lover in me in place of your mean husband ; rather make the best use of this opportunity with privacy and joy. Look here at these precious things of which you are already the owner, and not going to be the owner like others, who are waiting in vain for the rich legacy. Look at this necklace of pearls, which are brighter than those which Cleopatra used to dissolve in her drink. Look at the carbuncle which can throw into the shade even the brightest carbuncles which formed the eyes of St. Mark. Look at this diamond which would outweigh in price all the jewels that Lollia Paulina, wife of Emperor Cause Calegula, who used to adorn her body always with all the precious stones which were seized from the various states of Italy and which made her shine like the sun or a star. Take all these precious jewels, wear them and also lose them ; because there yet would remain an ear-ring so precious that it can purchase all the jewels again (if they are lost) and the whole kingdom of Italy. A gem which is possessed privately is not worth anything. We shall eat wonderful meals which will consist of the heads of parrots, the tongues of nightingales, the brains of peacocks, the brains of ostriches, and also the meat of phoenix, the rarest bird in the world, although it is long dead and extinct in the world.

Cel. Good sir, all these things may tempt a person who is intersted in such things ; but I cannot be tempted with any of these baits (temptations), because my only pleasure and pride is innocence which, if I loose once, will be lost for ever and cannot be compensated by anything in the world. If you have conscience......

Volp. 'Tis the beggar's virtue ;
If thou hast wisdom, hear me, Celia.
Thy baths shall be the juice of July-flowers,
Spirit of roses, and of violets,
The milk of unicorns, and panthers' breath
Gather'd in bags, and mixt with Cretan wines.
Our drink shall be prepared gold and amber ;
Which we will take, until my roof whirl round
With the vertigo : and my dwarf shall dance,
My eunuch, my fool make up the antic,
Whilst we, in changed shapes, act Ovid's tales,
Thou like Europa now, and I like Jove,
Then I like Mars, and thou like Erycine :
So, of the rest, till we have quite run through,
And wearied all the fables of the gods.
Then will I have the in more modern forms,
Attired like some sprightly dame of France,
Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish beauty ;
Sometimes, unto the Persian sophy's wife ;
Or the grand signior's mistress ; and, for change,
To one of our most artful courtezans,
Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian ;
And I will meet thee in as many shapes :
Where we may so transfuse our wandering souls
Out at our lips, and score up sums of pleasures,
[*Sings.*

That the curious shall not know
How to tell them as they flow ;
And the envious, when they find
What their nubmer is, be pined.

Cel. If you have ears that will be pierced—or eyes
That can be open'd—a heart that may be touch'd—
Or any part that yet sounds man about you—
If you have touch of holy saints—or heaven—
Do me the grace to let me 'scape—if not,

Volp. Conscience is the virtue only of the poor people. If yov are really prudent, Celia, just listen to me. You will bathe with the water mixed with the juice of July flowers, the essence of roses, and violet flowers, the milk of unicorns (fabulous horse-like animals with horns on their heads), the breath of leopards collected in begs and then again mixed with Cretan wines. The wines we shall drink will be prepared out of gold and amber (a yellow fossil resin), and we shall drink the wines so much that our heads will be reeling and my dwarf will dance while the eunuch will sing and the fool will join their dancing and singing. We shall, on the other hand, in our various garments play different roles as are mentioned in Ovid's tales, known as Metamorphoses. You will be Europa ; I will be Mars Jave, and you will again be Eurycine. We shall go on playing all such roles of all the gods and goddesses in Greek mythology till all the fables are exhausted completely. Then I shall have you robed more in the modern fashion like a French woman, then like a 'Tuscan lady or like a beautiful Spanish woman, and some-times like the wife of the Persian king, or like the Turkish Sultan's mistress, or for the sake of some change like some cunning prostitute of Venice, or like some intelligent Negro or even like some frigid (cold in passion) Russian woman ; and I will also meet you in as many varied shapes as you will have, where by we shall concentrate our rapturous souls on our lips (*i.e.* in our warmest kisses) and collect all the pleasures of life, so that those who are inquisitive about us will not come to know how we are enjoying ; and those who are envious will simply pine away at the mere thought of our unlimited pleasures.

Cel. If you are not altogether deaf or blind, if you have a heart that can be moved with pity, or if you have any touch of humanity or any least quality of virtue in you, should allow me to go away from here or better be kind enough to kill me on the spot. You should

Be bountiful and kill me. You do know,
I am a creature, hither ill betray'd
By one, whose shame I would forget it were:
If you will deign me neither of these graces,
Yet feed your wrath, sir, rather than your lust,
(It is a vice comes nearer manliness,)
And punish that unhappy crime of nature.
Which you miscall my beauty ; flay my face,
Or poison it with ointments, for seducing
Your blood to this rebellion. Rub these hands,
With what may cause an eating leprosy,
E'en to my bones and márrow : any thing
That may disfavour me, save in my honour—
And I will kneel to you, pray for you, pay down
A thousand hourly vows, sir, for your health ;
Report, and think you virtuous—

Volp. Think me cold,
Frozen and impotent, and so report me ?
That I had Nestor's hernia, thou wouldst think.
I do degenerate, and abuse my nation,
To play with opportunity thus long ;
I should have done the act, and then have parleye'd
Yield, or I'll force thee. [*Seizes her.*

Cel. O ! just God !

Volp. In vain—

Bon. [*rushing in*] Forbear, foul ravisher, libidinous swine !
Free the forced lady ; or thou diest, impostor.
But that I'm loth to snatch thy punishment
Out of the hand of justice, thou shouldst, yet
Be made the timely sacrifice of vengeance
Before this altar, and this dross, thy idol.—

Lady, let's quit the place, it is the den
Of villainy ; fear not you have a guard :
And he, ere long, shall meet his just reward.
[*Exeunt* Bon. *and* Cel.

Volp. Fall on me, roof, and bury me in ruin
Become my grave, that wert my shelter ! O !
I am unmask'd, unspirited, undone,
Betray' to beggary, to infamy—

know that I have been treacherously brought here by one whose disgraceful character I could never forget. If you can neither permit me to go away nor kill me, please better feed your anger rather than your vulgar passion on me, because anger is more like manliness than any vice like vulgar passion. You should better punish my personal beauty which is a curse indeed. Please take off the skin from my face or poison it with some ointment for exciting your vulgar blood to such a great height (*i.e.* madness). Rub these tender hands of mine in such a manner that they may seem to be suffering from leprosy that eats away the flesh to the very bone and the marrow. Do anything whatever may disfigure my beauty; but please save my honour (*i.e.* do not outrage my modesty). I will then kneel down before you and pray to you and also pray to God every hour for your good health and will announce before the world that you are a virtuous person.

Volp. Do you think that I am so cold and incapable of satisfying my passion, and do you want to report me as such? Do you think that I am sexually crippled like Nestor or that I am so weak and impotent that I am so weak and impotent that I shall insult my nation by letting slip this golden opportunity or delaying the act of enjoyment? I should have first of all committed the sex act and then talked to you. You must, therefore, submit to me or I will force you to submit.

[*Seizes her.*

Cel. O, just God!

Volp. You are making fruitless attempts to escape.

Bon. (*rushing in*) Stop, you wicked and licentious pig? Let off this lady from your hands or you will be killed on the spot. But I shall not deprive law of the penalty which it is going to impose upon you in due course of time just in presence of this gold and all the wealth which you worship. Lady, let us leave this place which is a hot-bed of wickedness. Do not be afraid; you have got a protector in me; and this scoundrel will have his proper punishment.

[*Exeunt* **Bon.** *and* **Cel.**

Volp. Let the roof of my house fall on me and bury me alive although it was formerly my shelter. O, I am exgosed, disheartened and ruined! I shall now be reduced to poverty and subjected to ill-name—

Scene VIII—Volopone,

Enter **Mosca,** *wounded and bleeding.*

Mos. Where shall I run, most wretched shame of men,
To beat out my unluck brains ?

Volp. Here, here.
What ! dost thou bleed ?

Mos. O that his well-drive'n sword
Had been so courteous to have cleft me down
Unto the navel, ere I lived to see
My life, my hopes, my spirits, my patron, all
Thus desperately engaged, by my error !

Volp. Woe on thy fortune !
Mos. And my follies, sir.
Volp. Thou hast made me miserable.
Mos. And myself, sir.
Who would have thought he would have hearken'd so ?

Volp. What shall we do ?

Mos. I know not ; if my heart
Could expiate the mischance, I'd pluck it out.
Will you be pleased to hang me, or cut my throat ?
And I'll requite you sir. Let's die like Romans ;
Since we have lived like Grecians. [*Knocking within.*

Volp. Hark ! who's there ?
I hear some footing ; officers, the saffi,
Come to aprehend us ! I do feel the brand
Hissing already at my forehead ; now
Mine ears are boring.

Mos. To your couch, sir, you,
Make that place good, however.
[*Volpone lies down, as before.*]
—Guilty men
Suspect what they deserve still.

Scene IX—Volpone, Voltore, Mosca.

Enter **Corbaccio.**

Mos. Signior Corbaccio !

Corb. Why, how now, Mosca ?

Scene VIII—Volpone.

Enter Mosca, *wounded and bleeding.*

Mos. Where shall I go ? The most cursed creature among mankind has beaten my unfortunate head.

Volp. Come here. What ? Are you really bleeding ?

Mos. I wish that this well-directed sword had been kind enough to have cut me down to two halves from the head to the navel before I could see all my life's hopes shattered and my patron being so badly involved in the scandalous matter due to my error of judgment !

Volp. Curse upon your misfortune !

Mos. Curse upon my foolish acts also !

Volp. You have made me wretched.

Mos. And myself too, sir. who could dream that he (Bonario) would be able to listen to the talk between you and Celia ?

Volp. What should we do now ?

Mos. I do not know. If my heart could make amends for the folly I have committed, I would like to pull out my heart. Will you agree to hang me or cut my throat ? I will then reward you, sir. Let us die by our own hands (*i.e.* commit suicide) just as we have lived in enjoyments by drinking and merry-making.
[*Knocking within.*

Volp. Listen ? Who is knocking there ? I hear some footsteps; probably, some officers or bailiff's followers have come to arrest us. I am feeling as if the burning brand is breathing its fire on my forehead : now my ears are pierced by the sound of knocking,

Mos. Occupy your couch and lie there, whatever may happen. (*Volphone lies down, as before.*) Guilty persons always fear their punishment which they rightly deserve.

Scene IX—Volpone, Voltore, Mosca.

Enter **Corbaccio.**

Mos. Mr. Corbaccio ?

Corb. Why, what is wrong with you, Mosca ?

Mos. O, undone, amazed, sir.
Your son, I know not by what accident,
Acquainted with your purpose to my patron,
Touching your Will, and making him your heir,
Enter'd our house with violence, his sword drawn
Enter'd our house with violence his sword drawn
Sought for you, call'd you wretch, unnatural,
Vow'd he would kill you.
Corb. Me!
Mos. Yes, and my patron.
Corb. This act shall disinherit him indeed;
Here is the Will.
Mos. 'Tis well, sir.
Corb. Right and well:
Be you as careful now for me.

Enter **Voltore**, *behind.*

Mos. My life, sir,
Is not more tender'd; I am only yours.
Corb. How does he? will he die shortly, think'st thou?
Mos. I fear
He'll outlast May.
Corb. To-day?
Mos. No; last out May, sir.
Corb. Could'st thou not give him a dram?
Mos. O, by no means, sir.
Corb. Nay, I'll not bid you.
Volp. [*coming forward*]. This is a knave, I see.
Mos. [*seeing Voltore*]. How! signior Voltore! did he hear me? [*Aside*
Volp. Parasite!
Mos. Who's that?—O, sir, most, timely welcome—
Volt. Scarce,
To the discovery of your tricks, I fear.
You are his, *only*? and mine also, are you not?
Mos. Who? I, sir?
Volt. You, sir. What device is this
About a Will?
Mos. A plot for you, sir.
Volt. Come,
Put not your foists upon me; I shall scent them.

Mos. Completely ruined by a surprise attack, sir. I do not know how your son came to know your motive of making a Will in favour of my master as his successor, and how he entered our house forcibly and how again he drew his sword with a view to kill you calling you a wretch, a scoundrel, an unnatural father.

Corb. Kill me ?

Mos. Yes, you and my master too.

Crob. This act on his part will be the cause of his disinheritance. Here is the Will.

Mos. It is good, sir.

Corb. It is right and good, but you should be on your guard for my sake.

Enter **Voltore,** *behind.*

Mos. My life is not more at anybody's service than at yours ; I am for ever at your service.

Corb. How is your master doing ? Will he die soon ?

Mos. I am afraid, he will live till May.

Corb. Will he die today ?

Mos. No, he will live beyond the month of May.

Corb. Could you not give him a dose of some drug (to kill him) ?

Mos. No, never, sir.

Corb. No, I will not ask you to drug him.

Volt. (Coming forward). This is a scoundrel, I find.

Mos. (Seeing Voltore). How is it ? It is Mr. Voltore ? Did he actually catch my words ? [*Aside*

Volt. Parasite !

Mos. Who is that ? O, sir, you have arrived at the right moment !

Volt. Hardly at the proper moment to expose your tricks, I am afraid. Do yau mean to say that you are at his service as well as at my service ?

Most. Who ? Is it I, sir ?

Volt. You, sir. What trick is this about a Will ?

Mos. It is plan to benefit you, sir.

Volt. Speak the truth. Don't try to play tricks with me ; I can find them out.

Mos. Did you not hear it ?

Volt. Yes, I hear Corbaccio.
Hath made your patron there his heir,

Mos. 'Tis true,
By my device, drawn to it by my plot,
With hope—

Volt. Your patron should reciprocate ?
And you have promised ?

Mos. For your good, I did sir.
Nay, more, I told his son, brought, hid him here,
Where he might hear his father pass the deed:
Being persuaded to it by this thought, sir,
That the unnaturalness first, of the act,
And then his father's oft disclaiming in him,
(Which I did mean t'help on,) would sure enrage him
To do some violence upon his parent,
On which the law should take sufficient hold,
And you be stated in a double hope :
Truth be my comfort, and my conscience,
My only aim was to dig you a fortune,
Out of these two old rotten sepulchres—

Volt. I cry thee mercy, Mosca.

Mos. Worth your patience,
And your great merit, sir. And see the change !

Volt. Why, what success ?

Mos. Most hapless ! you must help, sir.
Whilst we expected the old raven, in comes
Corvino's wife, sent hither by her husband—

Volt. What, with a present ?

Mos. No, sir, on visitation ;
(I'll tell you how anon ;) and staying long.
The youth he grows impatient, rushes forth.
Seizeth the lady, wounds me, makes her swear
(Or he would murder her, that was his vow)
To affirm my patron to have done her rape :
Which how unlike it is, you see ! and hence,
With that pretext he's gone, to accuse his father,
Defame my patron, defeat you—

Mos. Did you not listen to my talk ?

Volt. Yes, I heard that Crobaccio has made your master his successor.

Mos. You are right ; but the Will has been made on my suggestion and planned by me.

Volt. Do you mean to say that your master will make Corbaccio his successor in return ? And you have assured him of that ?

Mos. I did so, sir, for your benefit. No more than that ; I brought his son here and made him concealed in such a manner that he might hear his father handing over the Will, that he might he prompted by the unnatural conduct of his father for disinheriting him, to commit some violence on his father in a fit of rage, and that he would be naturally prosecuted by law which of course you would interpret against him, and thus you would be benefitted both ways (be receiving fees as a lawyer and also by being a successor to the joint wealth and property of Volpone and Corbaccio). My only consolation is truth and my only honest motive is to earn your fortune out of these two old ereatures (Volpone and Corbaccio) who are fit for being buried.

Volt. I beg your pardon, Mosca (for misunderstanding you in the beginning).

Mos. Your merit and patience will reward you, sir. Do you now understand the change of fortune (from Corbaccio to yourself) ?

Volt. What kind of success you mean ?

Mos. Most unfortunate. You must land your help, sir. While we were expecting Corbaccio, the wife Corvino arrived here being sent by her husband.

Volt. Did she come with a present (for Volpone) ?

Mos. No, sir ; but on a visit : (I will tell you the reasons soon) ; and Bonario—waiting too long became impatient, rushed out of his place of concealment, caught hold of the lady, wounded me and made her take an oath she would say that had been molested by my patron (Volpone). How unnatural the very idea is (Is it possible for an old crippled man to outrage a young woman ?) ! With this pretext he had departed from this place in order to accuse his father put a bad name on my patron (Volpone), and also to oust you from the inheritance—

Volp. Where is her husband ?
Let him be sent for straight.

Mos. Sir, I'll go fetch him.
Volt. Bring him to the Scrutineo.
Mos. Sir, I will.
Volt. This must be stopt.
Mos. O, you do nobly. sir.
Alas, 'twas labour'd all, sir, for your good ;
Nor was there want of counsel in the plot ;
But fortune can, at any time, o'erthrow
The projects of hundred learned clerks, sir.
Corb. [*listening*]. What's that ?
Volt. Will't pleases you, sir, to go along ?
[*Exit* **Corbaccio,** *followed by* **Voltore.**

Mos. Patron, go in, and pray for our success.
Volp [*rising from his couch*]. Need makes devotion :
Heaven your labour bless ! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Scene I—*A Street.*

Enter Sir **Politick Would-be,** *and* **Peregrine.**

Sir P. I told you, sir, it was a plot ; you see
What observation is ! You mention'd me
For some instructions : I will tell you, sir,
(Since we are met here in this height of Venice,)
Some few particulars I have set down,
Only for this meridian, fit to be known
Of your crude traveller ; and they are these
I will not touch, sir, at your phrase, or clothes,
For they are old.

Per. Sir, I have better.
Sir P. Pardon,
I meant, as they are themes.
Per. O, sir, proceed ;
I'll slander you no more of wit, good sir.
Sir P. First, for your grab, it must be grave and serious,
Very reserv'd and lock'd ; not tell a secret
On any terms, not to your father ; scarce
A fable, but with caution : make sure choice
Both of yoer company, and discourse ; beware
You never speak a truth—

Volt. But where is her husband? He should immediately brought here.

Mos. Sir, I will go and bring him.

Volt. Bring him to the Venetian Senate House.

Mos. Sir, I will do so.

Volt. This must be prevented.

Mos. You are acting nobly, Sir. Everything was designed for your good, sir. There was no lack of prudence in the plot; but then, Fate can upset the plans of a hundred learned scholars (*i.e.* Man proposes but God disposes).

Corb. (*listening*). What do you say?

Volt. Will you please, sir, move along?

[*Exit* **Corbaccio** *followed by* **Voltore.**

Mos. Master, please go inside and pray to God for the success of our plot.

Volp. (*rising from his couch*). It is out of necessity that one has to pray. May God grant the prayers!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Scene I—*A Street.*

Enter **Sir Politick Would-be,** *and* **Peregrine.**

Sir P. I told you that it was a plot against the mountebank. You have seen the correctness of my analysis of the situation. You asked me to give you certain instructions in manners. As we have met here at noon. I should like to give you only a few details of my advice, which I have noted down this very noon, and which should be known only by the ignorant traveller, I will not give instructions about language or clothes because such instructions have become stale:

Per. Sir I wish I could know them too.

Sir P. Excuse me, I wanted to talk-about them just as general topics (and not in detail).

Per. Sir, please go on with your instructions. I will not accuse you anymore of your bad intelligence.

Sir P. So far your clothes are concerned, they must sober and not swanky; you should not be talkative or open; you should not tell any secret of your mind or heart to anybody, not even to your father; you should choose your companions very cautiously and also the words you speak; take every care that you never speak the truth—

Per. How!

Sir P. Not to strangers.
For those be they you must converse with most;
Others I would not know, sir, but at distance,
So as I still might be a saver in them:
You shall have tricks else past upon you hourly.
And then, for your religion, profess none,
But wonder at the diversity, of all:
And, for your part, protest, were there no other
But simply the laws o' the land, you could content you,
Nic. Machiavel, and Monsieur Bodin, both
Were of this mind. Then must you learn the use
And handling of your silver fork at meals,
The metal of your glass; (these are main matters
With your Italian;) and to know the hour
When you must eat your melons, and your figs.

Per. Is that a point of state too?

Sir P. Here it is:
For your Venetian, if he see a man
Preposterous in the least, he has him straight;
He has; he strips him. I'll acquaint you, sir
I now have lived here, 'tis some fourteen months
Within the first week of my landing here,
All took me for a citizen of Venice,
I knew the forms so well—

Per. And nothing else. [*Aside.*

Sir P. I had read Contarene, took me a house,
Dealt with my Jews to furnish it with moveables—
Well, if I could but find one man, one man
To mine own heart, whom I durst trust, I would—

Per. What, what, sir?

Sir P. Make him rich; make him a fortune:
He should not think again. I would command it.

Per. As how?

Sir P. With certain projects that I have;
Which I may not discover.

Per. Why not?

Sir P. Never Speak the truth to strangers, because you are likely to converse mostly with strangers (in a foreign land). I would like to keep all other persons at a considerable distance from myself so that I may not have to talk to them freely. If you do not follow this particular advice, people may be playing all sorts of tricks upon you every moment (and naturally you may be in serious troubles). And then, so far your religion is concerned, do not profess your personal views in the matter but merely express your surprise at the variety of human religions. You should declare that you would be ready to follow the laws of the land without any reference to any particular religion or faith. This was the view (advice) of the two great political philosophers, namely Machiavelli and Bodin. Then, you should learn how to use the silver fork while dining; you should also be particular about the metal of the glass that you will use (because these are the main things which are important to the Italians). You must know also the time when you should eat melons or figs.

Per. Is that (eating melons and figs) also important?

Sir P. Here are further instructions. If a Venetian finds anybody a little unusual in his dress and manners, he will at once held him up to ridicule. I will tell you that I have lived in Venice for about fourteen months; and within the first week of my setting foot in this city, everybody took me to be a Venetian because I was well-acquainted with the ways and manners of Venetian life.

Per. And you knew nothing else. [*Aside*

Sir P. I have read the books of Garp Contarini, secured a house, and asked the Jews to provide my house with furniture (according to Italian taste). Well, if I could discover only one man to my liking or to whom I could confide my secrets, would—

Per. What would you have done, sir?

Sir P. I would have made him rich and earned him a great fortune so that he would not have to worry about his future anymore in life. I would have it absolutely sure.

Per. But how?

Sir P. With certain schemes which I have got in my brain but which I will not disclose to anybody.

Per. If I had?
But one to wager with, I would lay odds now,
He tells me instantly. [*Aside,*
Sir P. One is, and that
I care not greatly who knows, to serve the state
Of Venice with red herrings for three years,
And at a certain rate, from Rotterdam,
Where I have correspondence. There's a letter,
Sent me from one o' the states, and to that purpose;
He cannot write his name, but that's his mark,
Per. He is a chandler?
Sir P. No, a cheesemonger.
There are some others too with whom I treat
About the same negotiation;
And I will undertake it: for, 'tis thus.
I'll do't with ease, I have cast it all. Your hoy
Carries but three men in her, and a boy
And she shall make me three returns a year:
So, if there come but one of three, I save;
If two, I can defalk:—but this is now,
If my main project fail,
Per. Then you have others?
Sir P. I should be loth to draw the subtle air
Of such a place, without my thousand aims,
I'll not dissemble, sir: where'er I come,
I love to be considerative: and 'tis true,
I have at my free hours thought upon
Some certain goods upon the state of Venice,
Which I do call *my Cautions*; and, sir, which
I mean, in hope of pension, to propound
To the Great Council, then unto the Forty?
So to the Ten. My means are made already—
Per. By whom?
Sir P. Sir, one that, though his place be obscure,
Yet he can sway, and they will hear him. He's
A commandador.
Per. What! a common serjeant?
Sir P. Sir, such as they are, put it in their mouths,
What they should say, sometimes; as well as greater;
I think I have my notes to shew you— [*Searching his Pockets.*

Per. If I had somebody to bet with, I am sure, he would disclose the secret immediately.

Sir P. One project is and I do not care if anybody comes to know of it, to undertake to supply to the state of Venice red herrings (fish) at some fixed rate, imported from Rotterdam with which place I have been corresponding (negotiating). I possess a letter to this effect from one of the states of Netherlands: the correspondent cannot disclose his name but he has trade mark.

Per. Is he a dealer in candles of other such articles ?

Sir P. No, he is a dealer in cheese. There are other persons with whom I am negotiating for the same purpose. I have decided to undertake this trade, which I can carry on easily, because I have calculated everything in this connection. A small, one-mast vessel carries three men and a boy, and it is capable of three trips per year. If I can get only one trip by the vessel, I can earn some profit ; and if two, I can earn double the profit. But this trade I would take up if my main project fails.

Per. Then, you must have more projects ?

Sir P. I would be unwilling to live in a place like Venice if I had no thousand projects. I will not make any pretension. Wherever I happen to go, I love to be speculative, and it is true that whenever I am at leisure, I think of the welfare of Venice due to which I expect to be rewarded by the state in future ; and then, I expect a pension from the Greater and the Lesser Council of the State. I have thought out also the means of acheiving my end.

Per. Who is going to help you in the matter ?

Sir P. A person of unknown position and yet he can influence the government. He is a leutenant.

Per P. Is he an ordinary sergeant ?

Sir P. Although they are persons of ordinary position yet they sometimes suggest to the Council, the sanest counsel, and thus they influence even the Greater Council of the State. I think, I possess some notes to show you— (*Searching his Pockets.*

Per. Good sir.

Sir P. But you shall swear unto me, on your gentry,
Not to anticipate—

Per. I, sir!

Sir P. Nor reveal
A circumstance—My paper is not with me.

Per. O, but you can remember, sir.

Sir P, My first is
Concerning tinder boxes. Yes must know,
No family is here without its box.
Now, sir, it being so portable a thing.
Put case, that you or I were ill affected
Unto the state, sir; with it in our pockets,
Might not I go into the Arsenal,
Or you, come out again, and none the wiser?

Per. Except yourself, sir.

Sir P. Go to, then. I therefore
Advertise to the state, how fit it were,
That none but such as were known patriots,
Sound lovers of their country, should be suffer'd
To enjoy them in their houses; and even those
Seal'd at some office, and such a bigness
As might not lurk in pockets,

Per. Admirable?

Sir P. My next is, how to enquire, and be resolv'd,
By present demonstration, whether a ship,
Newly arrived from Soria, or from
Any suspected part of all the Levant,
Be guilty of the plague; and where they use
To lie out forty, fifty days, sometimes
About the Lazaretto, for their trial;
I'll save that charge and loss unto the merchant,
And in an hour other the doubt,

Per. Indeed. sir!

Sir P. Or—I will lose my labour.

Per. 'My faith, that's much.

Sir P. Nay, sir, conceive me. It will cost me in onions,
Some thirty livres—

Per. Good sir.

Sir P. But you will have to give me an assurance that you will not undertake any of the schemes ahead of me—

Per. Do you think, I will undertake your projects ?

Sir P. Not you shall be permitted to disclose a single detail of the projects. I have not got the papers in my pocket at present.

Per. But you can recollect, sir.

Sir P. My first project is about match-boxes. You ought to know that not a single family in Venice is without a matchbox. Now, sir, a match-box being such a handy thing, and if anybody who is not favourably inclined to the state may go into or come out of the magazine with it ; and then do you think, it would be wise on his part to do so ?

Per. You would be an exception, sir.

Sir P. Nonsense ; I, therefore, would like to suggest to the government that nobody, unless he is a declared lover of his state or country, should be permitted to use the matchbox in his house ; and even in the offices match-boxes should not be available except under some special permit or licence ; and also that the size of the match-boxes should be so big that they carried so easily in the pocket.

Per. A wonderful project indeed !

Sir P. My next project is how to make inquiries and be convinced whether a particular ship is free from the plague infection or not—particularly, a ship which has come from Syria or from any other suspected part of Asia Minor, where the ships are detained for forty or fifty days for the test of finding out if it is infected or not. By my special method, I shall be able to save a lot of money and time of the merchants by means of a special test, which will not take more than one hour or so at most.

Per. Really so, sir ?

Sir P. If I cannot find out the infection correctly, I am prepared to lose all my labour for the test.

Per. I am sure, the value of your labour would be great indeed.

Sir P. No, sir ; it will cost me not much money (thirty Livres) in purchasing some onions.

Per. Which is one pound sterling.
Sir P. Beside my water-works : for this I do, sir
First, I bring in your ship 'twixt two brick walls :
But those the state shall venture : on the one
I strain me a fair tarpauling, and in that
I stick my onions, cut in halves : the other
Is full of loop-holes, out at which I thrust
The noses of my bellows ; and those bellows
I keep, with water-works, in perpetual motion,
Which is the easiest matter of a hundred.
Now, sir, your onion, which doth naturally
Attract the infection, and your bellows blowing
The air upon him, will show, instantly,
By his changed colour, if there be contagion ;
Or else remain as fair as at the first,
—Now it is known, 'tis nothing.
Per. You are right, sir.
Sir P. I would I had my note.
Per. 'Faith, so would I :
But you have done well for once, sir.
Sir P. Were I false.
O. would be made so, I could shew you reasons
Hrow I could sell this state now to the Turk,
Spite of their gallies, or their—[*Examining his papers.*
Per. Pray you, sir Pol.
Sir P. I have them not about me.
Per. That I fear'd :
They are there, sir.
Sir P. No, this is my diary.
Wherein I note my actions of the day.
Per. Pray you, let's see, sir. What is here ? *Notandum,*
[Reads.
A rat had gnawn my spur-leathers ; notwithstanding,
I put on new, and did go forth : but first
I threw three beans over the thereshold. Item,
I went and bought two tooth-picks, wherof one
I burst immediately in a discourse
With a Dutch merchant, 'bout rogion del stato.
From him I went and paid a moccinigo
For piecing my silk stockings ; by the way
I cheapen'd sprats ; and at St. Mark's I urined,
'Faith these are politic notes !

Per. Which means, the cost will come to one pound (about Rs. 11·75 nP).

Sir P. In addition to the expenses of the water-works. For this special test, the ship (suspected to be plague-infected) should be brought in between two walls, which have been built at the expense of the state. On one of the walls a clean tarpaulin has to be hung up on which about one hundred onions have to be stuck up. The other wall should have many loopholes (small openings) through which the noses of the bellows have to be passed. Then the water-works will help the blowing of the bellows, which will continuously blow the air at the onions (cut into two halves) through the ship, so that the colour of the onions will change if the ship is infected or it will remain as bright as ever. Now that the project has been disclosed to you it is no longer a secret.

Per. It is quite true, sir.

Sir P. I wish, I had my notes with me.

Per. I also wish, you had them; but then, you have shown the notes at least once, sir.

Sir P. If my words were not true or if they could be proved to be false, I would be able to give you reasons to show that I can transfer this state of Venice to the hands of the Turks although Venice may be possessing sufficient number of boats and other resources of defence. [*Examining his papers.*

Per. Please show me the papers, Sir Politick.

Sir P. I have not got the papers with me just at this moment.

Per. I also feared like that (that the papers are not with you). But look the papers are here, sir.

Sir P. No. this is not the papers but my diary in which I note all my actions every day.

Per. Please let me have a look, sir. What is written here? To be carefully noted. (*Reads*) A rat ate the leathers of the badge of my knighthood; in spite of that I wore new spurs and went out; but first I threw three beans over the threshold (for killing the rats); I went out and purchased two tooth picks of which one I destroyed soon afterwards while conversing with a Dutch merchant about certain affairs of the state; from him I went and paid about nine pence (moccingo) to somebody for mending my silk stockings; incidentally. I reduced the price of sprats (fish) : at St. Mark, I passed my urine. Surely, these are important notes.

Sir P. Sir, I do slip
No action of my life, but thus I quote it.
Per. Believe me it is wise!
Sir P. Nay, sir read forth.

Scene II—Politick, Peregrine.

Enter, at a distance, **Lady Politick Would-be, Nano,** *and two* **Waiting-women**

Lady P. Where should this loose knight be, trow? sure he's housed.
Nan. Why, then he's fast.
Lady P. Ay, he plays both with me.
I pray you stay. This heat will do more harm
To my complexion, than his heart is worth.
(I do not care to hinder, but to take him)
How it comes off! [*Rubbing her cheeks.*
1 Wom. My master's yonder.
Lady P. Where?
2 Wom. With a young gentleman.
Lady P. That same's the party;
In man's apparel! 'Pray you, sir, jog my knight:
I will be tender to his reputation.
However he demerit.
Sir P. [*Seeing her.*] My lady!
Per. Where?
Sir P. 'Tis she indeed, sir; you shall know her. She is,
Were she not mine, a lady of that merit,
For fashion and behaviour; and for beauty
I durst compare—
Per. It seems you are not jealous,
That dare commend her.
Sir P. Nay, and for discourse—
Per. Being your wife, she cannot miss that.

Sir P. Sir, I do not miss to put down any of my actions in my diary.

Per. I am sure, it is a wise policy.

Sir P. No, sir, go on reading the diary further.

Scene II—Politick, Peregrine.

Enter, at a distance, **Lady Politick Would-be Nano** *and two* **Waiting-women.**

Lady P. Where can this knight of loose character be found ? Surely, he must be closetted with some courtesan (prostitute).

Nan. Then, he must be really living a fast (loose or licentious) life.

Lady P. Yes, he is playing fast and loose (deceiving) with me. Please stop for a moment. This heat (of the sun) will do more injury to my complexion than his (Sir P's) false heart can do. I do not care to prevent him from his enjoyment but to catch him red-handed (while in the company of a prostitute). How the powder and the rouge is coming off with the perspiration.

[*Rubbing her cheeks.*

1 Wom. My master is there.

Lady P. Where ?

2 Wom. In the company of a young gentleman.

Lady P. That must be the same courtesan ; she is going in a male garb. Please, sir, push my husband gently ; I will not soil his good name however much he may deserve to be scandalized.

Sir P (*Seeing her*) My wife !

Per. Where ?

Sir P. Surely, she is my wife ; I will introduce you to her; even if she were not my wife, I would say that she is a woman of great taste and refinement ; and so far beauty is concerned, I would venture to compare her—

Per. It seems, you are not suspicious when you are praising her so much.

Sir P. No, so far her power of conversation is concerned—

Per. She being your wife, cannot but listen to you (or cannot but be equally talkative like you).

Sir P. [*Introducing Per.*] Madam,
Here is a gentleman, pray you, use him fairly ;
He seems a youth, but he is—

Lady P. None.

Sir P. Yes, one
Has put his face as soon into the world—

Lady P. You mean, as early ? but to-day ?

Sir P. How's this ?

Lady P. Why, in this habit, sir ; you apprehend me :—
Well, master Would-be, this doth not become you ;
I had thought the odour, sir, of your good name
Had been more precious to you ; that you would not
Have done this dire massacre on your honour ;
One of your gravity and rank besides !
But knights, I see, care little for the oath
They make to ladies ; chiefly, their own ladies.

Sir P. Now, by my spurs, the symbol of my knighthood,—

Per. Lord, how his brain is humbled for an oath ! [*Aside.*

Sir P. I reach you not.

Lady P. Right, sir, your policy
May bear it through thus.—Sir, a word with you. [*To Per.*
I would be loth to contest publicly
With any gentlewoman, or to seem
Forward, or violent, as the courtier says ;
It comes too near rusticity in a lady,
Which I would shun by all means : and however
I may deserve from master Would-be, yet
T'have one fair gentlewoman thus be made
The unkind instrument to wrong anther,
And one she knows not, ay, and to persever ;
In my poor judgment, is not warranted
From being a solecism in our sex,
If not in manners.

Per. How is this ?

Sir P. Sweet madam,
Come nearer to your aim.

Sir P. (*Introducing Peregrine*) Madam, here is a gentleman; please use him gently; he is a youth but he is—

Lady P. He is none (not at all a young man but a young woman).

Sir P. Yes, a youth who has come into this world.

Lady P. Do you mean, he has come into this world as early or just today ?

Str P. Why do you talk like this ?

Lady P. Because he is in male dress, sir, try to understand me. Well, Mr. Would-be, this is not good of you; I thought that your reputation was more precious to you, and that you should not have played havoc with your good name in this reckless manner. Then again, you should have considered your age and position. But then, knights, I find, very rarely care for the solemn assurances they make to ladies, and particularly to their wives.

Sir P. Now, I swear in the name of the spurs which I wear as the symbol of my knighthood—

Per. Good God, how he lowers himself by swearing in this manner ! [*Aside.*

Sir P. I do not understand you.

Lady P. Well, sir, it may be your policy not to understand me. *To Per.*

May I talk to you for a moment ? I should be unwilling to compete publicly with any gentlewoman or to be rude or violent in any manner to her. The courtier (a polished or refined person) says that it is a mark of backwardness in a lady, and I would like to avoid such behaviour on my part at any cost. Whatever ill-treatment I may deserve in the hands of my husband, still to engage one gentlewoman, to insult another gentlewoman in this manner, and particularly, when one does not know the other, and then again, to continue this sort of insult, is, in my humble opinion, not at all a mark of good manners, especially to the fair sex.

Per. What does she speak ?

Str P. Gentle madam, please speak more plainly.

Lady P. Marry, and will, sir.
Since you provoke me with your impudence,
and laughter of your light land-syren here,
Your Sporus, your hermaphrodite—

Per. What's here?
Poetic fury, and historic storms!

Sir P. The gentleman, believe it, is of worth,
And of our nation

Lady P. Ay, your White-friars nation.
Come, I blush for you, master Would-be, I;
And am asham'd you, should have have no more fore-head,
Than thus to be the patron, or St. George,
To a lewd harlot, a base fricatrice.
A female devil, in a male outside.

Sir P. Nay,
An you be such a one, I must bid adieu
To your delights. The case appears too liquid. [*Exit.*

Lady P. Ay, you may carry't clear. with your state-face !—
But for your carnival concupiscence,
Who here is fled for liberty of conscience,
From furious persecution of the marshal,
Her will I dis'ple.

Per. This is fine, i'faith!
And do you use this often? Is this part
Of your wit's exercise', gainst you have occasion?
Madam—

Lady P. Go to, sir.

Per. Do you hear me, lady?
Why, if your knight have set you to beg shirts,
Or to invite me home, you might have done it
A nearer way' by far.

Lady P. This cannot work you
Out of my snare.

Per. Why, am I in it, then?
Indeed your husband told me you were fair.
And so you are; only nose inclines,
That side that's next the sun, to the queen-apple-

Lady P. This cannot be endur'd by any patience.

Lady P. Surely, I shall speak more plainly, sir, because you have annoyed me with your act of folly and also by the laughter of your frivolous companion, who is a temptress, who is dressed in a male garb to pass for a young man, and who is just like Sporus who was castrated in order to be married to Nero.

Per. What does she speak ? Does she indulge in mere poetic outbursts or in great fits of anger ?

Sir P. The gentleman in my company, you should believe to be a man of position and also belonging to our country (England).

Lady P. Yes, he belongs to the race of prostitutes or gamblers or pickpockets or other criminals. I am feeling ashamed of you, Mr Would-be. I am really sorry to find that you have no better dignity than to be the patron of public or a notorious courtesan or a wicked woman in a male garb.

Sir P. No, if you are not inclined to understand me, I should better leave you to your own whimsical fancies from which you are clearly suffering. [*Exit.*

Lady P. You may escape by getting away from here by putting on a serious look just as the diplomats generally put on to hide their real feelings. But so far your carnal passion is concerned, and indulgence in it on some pretext or other, I am going to teach a good lesson to your courtesan (*i. e.* Peregrine).

Per. This sort of speech is admirable indeed. Do you often indulge in such words ? Is it one of your tricks which you usually play, Madam ?

Lady P. Nonsense !

Per. Do you listen to me, lady ? If your knight (husband or patron) has employed you to beg some clothes (of which you may be in need) or to tempt me to your place, you could have given me clear hints (*i. e.* told me plainly instead of using such indirect method of acting and speaking).

Lady P. You cannot get out of my hands by merely pretending innocence,

Per. Do you think, I am already in your hand ? Really, your husband told me that you are beautiful which you are really except that your nose is reddish like a queen-apple or the sun.

Lady P. This (insulting remark) is more than I can tolerate·

Scene III—Lady Politick, Peregrine.

Enrer Mosca.

Mos. What is the matter, madam ?

Lady P. If the senate
Right not my quest in this, I will protest them
To all the world, no aristocracy.

Mos. What is the injury, lady ?

Lady P. Why, the callet
You told me of, here I have ta'en disguised.

Mos. Who ? this ! what means your ladyship ? the creature.
I mention'd to you is apprehended now.
Before the senate; you shall see her—

Lady P. Where ?

Mos. I'll bring you to her. This young gentleman,
I saw him land this morning at the port.

Lady P. Is't possible ! how has my judgment wander'd ?
Sir, I must blushing, say to you, I have err'd ;
And plead your pardon.

Per. What, more changes yet !

Lady P. I hope you have not the malice to remember
A gentlewoman's passion. If you stay
In Venice here, please you to use me, sir—

Mos. Will you go, madam ?

Lady P. 'Pray you, sir, use me ; in faith,
The more you see me, the more I shall conceive
You have forgot our quarrel.

[*Exeunt* Lady Would-be, Mosca Nano Waiting-women,

Per. This is rare !
Sir Politick Would-be ? no ; sir Politick Bawd,
To bring me thus acquainted with his wife !
Well, wise sir Pol, since you have practised thus
Upon my freshman-ship, I'll try your salt-head,
What proof it is against a counter-plot [*Exit.*

Scene III—Lady Politick, Peregrine,
Enter **Mosca.**

Mos. What is wrong, madam ?

Lady P. If the government of Venice does not listeh to my complaint or does not compensate the wrong or the insult done to me, I shall declare before the whole world that the Venetian State has no sense of justice or dignity.

Mos. What is that wrong done to you, madam ?

Lady P. The courtesan you talked about, I have here caught red-handed with Sir Politick, in the garb of a young man.

Mos. Whom do you mean ? This gentleman ! What do you actually mean to say, madam ? The courtesan in question has been arrested, and she is under trial before the Senate ; you will meet her personally—

Lady P. Where ?

Mos. I shall take you to her. As for young gentleman, I saw him landing at Venice just this morning.

Lady P. Is it really true ? I wonder how my power of judgment has erred. Sir, I must confess to you most shamefully that I have been wrong in my judgment, and so, I beg your pardon.

Per. What more changes (fits !) should I find in you ?

Lady P. I hope, you are not mean enough to remember my fits of anger. If you happen to stay in Venice. please make use of me (my influence), sir.

Mos. Will you go with me, madam ?

Lady P. Please make use of me (my influence), sir, surely, the more you will meet me, the more I shall believe that you have forgotten the ill feelings between us.

(*Exeunt* **Lady Would be, Mosca, Nano,** *and* **Waiting women.**

Per. This is really most strange, Should I call him by the name of Sir Politick Would be or by the name of Sir Politick Licence, because, he introduces me to his wife in this strange manner ? Well, cunning Sir Politick, because you have taken such an undue advantage of my inexperience, I am going to try the tricks of your experience in order to play a counter-plot against you. (*Exit.*

Scene IV—*The Scrutineo, or Senate House.*
Enter **Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino,** *and* **Mosca**

Volt. Well, now you know the carriage of the business,
Your constancy is all that is required
Unto the safety of it.

Mos. Is the lie.
Safely convey'd amongst us ? is that sure ?
Knows every man his burden ?

Corv. Yes.
Mos. Then Shrink not.
Corv. But knows the advocate the truth ?

Mos. O, Sir,
By no means ; I devised a formal tale.
That salv'd your reputation. But be valiant, sir.

Corv. I fear no one but him, that this his pleading
Should make him stand for a co-heir—

Mos. Co-halter !
Hang him; we will but use his tongue, his noise
As we do croakers here.

Corv. Ay, what shall he do ?

Mos. When we have done, you mean ?

Corv. Yes.

Mos. Why, we'll think :
Sell him for mummia; he's half dust already,
Do you not smile, [*to Voltore*,[to see this buffalo,
How he doth sport it with his head ?—I should,
If all were well and past *Aside*,]—Sir [*to Corbaccio*.]
only you
Are he that shall enjoy the crop of all.
And these not know for whom they toil.

Corb. Ay, peace.
Mos. [*turning to Corvino*.] But you shall eat it. Much !
[*Aside*.
—Worshipful sir, [*to Voltore*.]
Mercury sit upon your thundering tongue.
Or the French Hercules and make your language
As conquering as his club, to beat along.
As with a tempest, flat, our adversaries ;
But much more yours, sir.

Scene IV—*The* **Scrutineo** *or Senate-House*.
Enter **Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino,** *and* **Mosca.**

Volt. Now you know the procedure of the case; the success of the case would depend upon your faithful sticking to your statements.

Mos. Has the false statement been properly distributed among us all ? Are you sure that everyone knows his own responsibility ?

Corv. Yes.

Mos. Then, do not go back upon your decision (or statement).

Corv. But does the lawyer (Voltore) know the true case ?

Mos. Surely, not, sir ; I invented a fictitious story just to save your good name, but be courageous, sir.

Corv. I do not fear anybody but the lawyer (Voltore) lest his powerful pleading influences Volpone to make him a joint-successor along with me.

Mos. Better say, jointly to be hanged. We are going to exploit merely his power of pleading just as we are exploiting Corbaccio here.

Corv. Yes, but what are you going to do with Corbaccio ?

Mos. Do you mean, after we have won the case ?

Corv. Yes.

Mos. We shall think over the matter, we shall dispose of him as a mummy (a dead body preserved artificially against decomposition) ; because he is now as dead. Do you not enjoy (*to Voltore*) to look at this fat fellow or blunt-headed creature (Corvino, the blunt-headed fool), how he tosses his head like a buffalo—I should smile at every body if everything passes allright (*Aside*)—Sir (*to Corbaccio*), you alone will reap the harvest (enjoy all the benefits); these other persons are not aware that they are all working hard for your benefit.

Corb. Yes, be quiet please.

Mos. (*Turning to Corvino*) But you will have to swallow the greatest insult (*Aside*) ; Reverend or respectful sir, (*to Voltore*), may the god of eloquence preside over your tongue or may the French Hercules (who is also the god of eloquence) inspire your power of eloquence (power of pleading) so that your language may be as invincible as the club of Hercules and succeed in defeating all our opponents, and particularly, your rivals, sir.

Volt. Here they come, have done.
Mos. I have another witness, if you need, sir,
I can produce.
Volt. Who is it ?
Mos. Sir, I have her.

Scene V—Voltore, Corbaccio Corvino, Mosca.

Enter **Avocatori** *and take their seats*, **Bonario, Celia, Notario,** Commandadori, Saffi *and other* Officers *of justice.*

1 *Avoc.* The like of this the senate never heard of.
2 *Avoc.* 'Twill come most strange to them when we report it.
4 *Avoc.* The gentlewoman has been ever held.
Of unreproved name.
3 *Avoc.* So has the youth.
4 *Avoc.* The more unnatural part that of his father.
2 *Avoc.* More of the husband.
1 *Avoc.* I not know to give
His act a name, it is so monstrous !
4 *Avoc.* But the impostor, he's a thing created
To exceed examole !
1 *Avoc.* And all after-times !
2 *Avoc.* I never heard a true voluptuary
Described, but him.
3 *Avoc.* Appear yet those were cited ?
Not. All but the old magnifico, Volpone.
1 *Avoc.* Why is not he here ?
Mos. Please your fatherhoods,
Here is his advocate : himself's so weak
So feeble--
4 *Avoc.* What are you ?
Bon. His parasite,
His knave, his pandar : I beseech the court,
He may be forced to come, that your grave eyes
May bear strong witness of his strange impostures

Volt. They are all coming this way : so be quiet.

Mos. If you require, have got another witness, sir, whom I can produce before the Senate.

Volt. Who is that ?

Mos. Sir. I have secured her.

Enter **Avocatori** *and take their seats*; **Bonario, Celia, Notario, Commandadori, Saffi,** *and other Officers of justice.*

1 *Avoc.* The Senate has never heard of such a case.

2 *Avoc.* The case will appear as the strangest case when we shall relate the case to the people.

4 *Avoc.* The gentlewoman (Celia) is known to be a woman of spotless character.

5 *Avoc.* So also the youn g man (Bonario) is known for his good character.

4 *Avoc.* The father (Corbaccio) seems to be more unnatural than the son.

2 *Avoc.* The husband (Corvino) is more unnatural than the father (Corbaccio).

1 *Avoc.* Hi action is so unnatural that I cannot put any name on it.

4 *Avoc.* But the pretender (Volpone) is a creature that surpasses all examples.

1 *Avoc.* And for all times to come (*i. e.* for all future).

2 *Avoc.* I never heard of a licentious creature like him (Volpone).

3 *Avoc.* Do all the persons mentioned (in the case) appear before us ?

Not. All are present except the noble man, Volpone.

1 *Avoc.* Why is he not present here ?

Mos. please note ; Reverend fathers, that he is so weak and sickly, and that is why, his lawyer (Voltore) is present on his behalf.

4*Avoc.* But who are you (or what is your relationship with Volpone) ?

Bon. His parasite (*i. e.* blood-sucker), his wicked agent for procuring food for his (Volpone's) lust. I request the court that he (Volpone) may be ordered to come here so that your venerable eyes may discover the great pretender or dissimulator.

Volt. Upon my faith and credit with your virtues,
He is not able to endure the air.

2 *Avoc.* Bring him, however.

3 *Avoc.* We will see him.

4 *Avoc.* Fetch him.

Volt. Your fatherhood's fit pleasures be obey'd ;
[*Exeunt Officers.*
But sure, the sight will rather move your pities,
Than indignation. May it please the court'
In the mean time, he may be heard in me ;
I know this place most void of prejudice,
And therefore crave it, since we have no reason
To fear out truth should hurt our cause.

3 *Avoc.* : Speak free.

Volt. Then know, most honour'd fathers, I must now
Discover to your stangely abused ears.
The most prodigious and most frontless piece
Of solid impudence, and treachery,
That ever vicious nature yet brought forth
To shame the state of Venice. This lewd woman,
That wants no artificial looks or tears
To help the vizor she has now put on,
Hath long been known a close adulteress
To that lascivious youth there ; not suspected,
I say, but known, and taken in the act
With him ; and by this man, the easy husband,
Pardon'd ; whose timeless bounty makes him now
Stand here, the most unhappy, innocent person,
That ever man's own goodness made accused.
For these not knowing how to owe a gift
Of that dear grace, but with their shame ; being placed
So above all powers of their gratitude,
Began to hate the benefit ; and, in place
Of thanks, devise to extirpe the memory
Of such an act ; wherein I pray your fatherhoods
To observe the malice, yea, the rage of creatures
Discover'd in their evils ; and what heart
Such take, even from their crimes :—but that anon
Will more appear.—This gentleman, the father,
Hearing of this foul fact, with many others,

Volt. If you have faith in the honesty of my words, you should believe that he (Volpone) is not able even to stand the court atmosphere.

2 *Avoc.* Bring him anyhow.

3 *Avoc.* We shall have a look at him.

4 *Avoc.* Get him here.

Volt. The wishes of your reverend selves will be obeyed ; [*Exeunt Officers.*

But surely, the very look of the man will excite pity in you rather than any anger. May the court be pleased in the meanwhile to listen to me on his (Volpone's) behalf ? I know that this place (the senate) is absolutely impartial, and therefore, I wish that you should listen to my true statements without any bias.

3 *Avoc.* Speak without any hesitation.

Volt. Then let it be known to you, most reverend fathers, what I am going to disclose to your most misinformed ears, an act which is most heinous and shameless that has ever been committed by a wicked person in the whole state of Venice. This licentious women (Celia) who is putting on plenty of tears and other artificial looks on her face, has been long known as being in illicit connection with this licentious youth (Bonario). I would not like to say that she is known as a licentious woman but she has actually been caught red-handed in the act of adultery with him by this man, her husband, who has pardoned her but who due to his boundless forgiveness, now stands most miserable because of his innocence which made him the victim of this treachery (wife's treachery). These creatures (Bonario and Celia) do not know how to be grateful to the forgiving father or husband but instead hated such a great act of benevolence, and instead of expressing their thankfulness, they tried to forget altogether the great act of forgiveness. I would, therefore, appeal to you, venerable fathers, to find out the mean treachery and the vulgar motive behind their actions which will soon appear most apparent. The gentleman, the father of the youth, on hearing of this foul act of treachery along with reports of many such

Which daily struck at his too tender ears,
And grieved in nothing more than that he could not
Preserve himself a parent, (his son's ills
Growing to that strange flood,) at last decreed
To disinherit him.

1 *Avoc.* These be strange turns!

2 *Avoc.* The young man's fame was ever fair and honest.

Volt. So much more full of danger is his vice,
That can beguile so under shade of virtue.
But, as I said, my honour's sires, his father
Having this settled purpose, by what means
To him betray'd, we know not, and this day
Appointed for the deed; that parricide,
I cannot style him better, by confederacy
Preparing this his paramour to be there.
Enter'd Volpone's house, (who was the man.
Your fatherhoods must understand, design'd
For the inheritance) there sought his father:—
But with what purpose sought he him, my lords?
I tremble to pronounce it, that a son
Unto a father, and to such a father,
Should have so foul, felonious intent!
It was to murder him: when being prevented
By his more happy absence, what then did he?
Not check his wicked thoughts; no, now new deeds,
(Mischief doth never end where it begins)
An act of horror, fathers! he dragg'd forth
The aged gentleman that had there lain bed-rid
Three years and more, out of his innocent couch,
Naked upon the floor, there left him; wounded
His servant in the face: and, with this strumpet
The stale to his forged practice, who was glad
To be so active,—(I shall here desire
Your fatherhoods to note but my collections,
As most remarkable,—) thought at once to stop
His father's ends, discredit his free choice
In the old gentleman, redeem themselves,
By laying infamy upon this man,
To whom, with blushing, they should owe their lives.

1 *Avoc.* What proof have you of this?

wicked acts that were reported to his ears, felt very sorry that he could no longer remain the father of that disgraceful son, because of the height of such wicked acts committed by the son, and that at last he was obliged to deprive the son of his rightful inheritance.

1 *Avoc.* These are strange acts!

2 *Avoc.* The young man's character was always known to be spotless.

Volt. It is all the more dangerous that under cover of modesty he committed such acts of treachery. But as I told you, venerable fathers, his father (Corbaccio) having decided on disinheriting his son, was betrayed by the son, how we do not know, but today was the day of the act of treachery. This youth, who is the murderer of his father, and I cannot describe him better, conspired with his mistress (Celia) to be present at that moment and accordingly, entered the house of Volpone to whom the father willed his wealth and property ; and there he was on the look out for his father with what foul purpose, you cannot probably imagine. I shudder to tell you that a son can be bent upon with such a foul purpose against such a good father ; it was his treacherous purpose to murder him, from which however, he was prevented by the absence of the father at the place. And what did he do after that ? He did not check his foul intentions but with new wicked intentions, as you know, when once wicked intentions are inspired they never end, he pulled out, to the horror of all, the old crippled person (Volpone) who had been lying ill in his bed for the last three years, and then placed him upon the naked floor, and further he gave several stabs at the face of his servant (Mosca) ; and with the help of this prostitute (Celia) who is an accomplice in his foul act (I should entreat you, noble fathers, to examine the body of witnesses I have collected), he tried to prevent his father from disinheriting him (the son *i.e.* Bonario) by making most foul allegations against this venerable old man (Volpone) to whom they (Bonario and Celia) should be grateful for their lives.

1 *Avoc.* What proofs have you got to substantiate your statements ?

Bon. Most honoured fathers,
I humbly crave there be no credit given
To this man's mercenary tongue.
2 *Avoc.* Forbear.
Bon. His soul moves in his fee.
3 *Avoc.* O, sir.
Bon. This fellow.
For six sols more, would plead against his Maker.
1 *Avoc.* You do forget yourself.
Volt. Nay, nay, grave fathers,
Let him have scope : can any main imagine
That he will spare his accuser, that would not
Have spared his parent ?
1 *Avoc.* Well, produce your proofs.
Cel. I would I could forget I were a creature.
Volt. Signior Corbaccio ! [*Corbaccio comes forward.*
4 *Avoc.* What is he ?
Volt. The father.
2 *Avoc.* Has he had an oath ?
Not. Yes.
Corb. What must I do now ?
Not. Your testimony's craved.
Corb. Speak to the knave ?
I'll have my mouth first stopt with earth ; my heart
Abhors his knowledge : I disclaim in him.
1 *Avoc* But for what cause ?
Corb. The more portent of nature !
He is an utter stranger to my loins.
Bon. Have they made you to this?

Bon. Most reverend fathers, I would humbly entereat you not to put any trust upon the words of this man's professional tongue.

2 *Avoc.* Be patient.

Bon. His soul (tongue) is inspired by the money he is paid for his labour.

3. *Avoc.* O, sir.

Bon. This fellow (Voltore) will accuse even his Creator on the temptation of a little more money.

1 *Avoc.* You are forgetting what you are speaking before the Senators in a court of law.

Volt. No, no, venerable fathers, let him have his full freedom. Can anybody believe that he will not blame his accuser (*i.e.* myself the lawyer) when he has accused his own father ?

1 *Avoc.* Well, let the witnesses appear and give their evidence.

Cel. I wish, I could forget that I were ever been born (or been alive).

Volt. Mr. Corbaccio. [Corbaccio *comes forward.*

4 *Avoc.* What is his relationship with the accused ?

Volt. He is the father of the accused.

2 *Avoc.* Has he undergone the formality of taking an oath (that he will speak the truth and nothing but the truth in the court of law) ?

Not. Yes, sir.

Corb. What shall I have to do now ?

Not. Your evidence is wanted.

Corb. Do you want me to speak about the rascal (Bonario)? I would, first of all, plug my mouth with earth before I go to speak, because my heart hates to own him as my son.

1 *Avoc.* But on what ground ?

Corb. He is an evil omen (some bad sign which foretells some disaster). He was never begotten by me (*i.e.* he is not my son at all).

Bon. Have they changed you like this ?

Corb. I will not hear thee,
Monster of men, swine, goat, wolf, parricide !
Speak not, thou viper.

Bon. Sit, I will sit down,
And rather wish my innocence should suffer,
Than I resist the authority of a father.

Volt. Signior Corvino ! [Corvino *comes forward.*

2 *Avoc.* This is strange.

1 *Avoc.* Who's this ?

Not. The husband.

4 *Avoc.* Is he sworn ?

Not. He is.

3 *Avoc.* Speak, then.

Corv. This woman, please your fatherhoods is a whore,
Of most hot exercise, more than a partrich,
Upon record—

1 *Avoc.* No more.

Corv. Neighs like a jennet.

Not. Preserve the honour of the court,

Corv. I shall,
And modesty of your most reverend ears.
And yet I hope that I may say, these eyes
Have seen her glued unto that piece of cedar,
That fine well-timber'd gallant ; and that here
The letters may be read, through the horn,
That make the story perfect.

Mos. Excellent ! sir.

Corv. There is no shame in this now, is there ?
[*Aside to Mosca.*

Mos. None.

Corv. Or if I said, I hoped that she were onward
To her damnation, if there be a hell
Greater than whore and woman ; a good catholic
May make the doubt.

3 *Avoc.* His grief hath made him frantic.

1 *Avoc.* Remove him hence.

2 *Avoc.* Look to the woman. [Celia *swoons.*

Corv. I will not listen to any of your words ; you are a monster, a swine, a goat, a wolf, a murderer of the father ; don't talk to me, you blood-sucking creature.

Bon. I would better keep quiet and let my innocent nature be accused unjustly than rebel against the authority of my father.

Volt. Mr. Corvino. [*Corvino comes forward.*

2 *Avoc.* This is a strange case.

1 *Avoc.* Who is this man ?

Not. The husband of the other accused (Celia).

4 *Avoc.* Has he taken the oath ?

Not. Yes, sir.

3 *Avoc.* Then, let him speak (give his evidence).

Corv. This woman, reverend fathers. is a public prostitute, more passionate than even a partridge.

1 *Avoc.* You need not speak anymore.

Corv. She calls for mating like a mare in the rut.

Not. Maintain the decency of the court.

Corv. I shall surely maintain the sense of your decency, reverend fathers, and yet I should be permitted to say that I have seen with my own eyes this whore clinging like a creeper to this young man who is just like a cidar tree (*i.e.* lost in a long embrace). Please have a look into these letters, which will prove completely the truth of my statements.

Mos. Well done, sir.

Corv. Is there any disgrace in making such a statement ? [*Aside to* **Mosca.**

Mos. Not at all.

Corv. Or if I said that she was going to be punished in hell (if there is any hell at all) more than any prostitute or courtesan, a staunch puritan might doubt the truth of my statement.

3 *Avoc.* His grief has turned him mad.

1 *Avoc.* Take him away from here.

2 *Avoc.* Just take care of the woman. [**Celia** *swoons.*

Corv. Rare!
Prettily feign'd, again!

4 *Avoc.* Stand from about her.

1 *Avoc.* Give her the air.

3 *Avoc.* What can you say? [*To* Mosca.

Mos. My wound,
May it please your wisdoms, speaks for me, received
In aid of my good patron, when he mist
His sought-for father, when that well-taught dame
Had her given her to cry out, A rape!

Bon. O most laid impudence! Fathers—

3 *Avoc.* Sir, be silent;
You had your hearing free, so must they theirs.

2 *Avoc.* I do begin to doubt the imposture here.

4 *Avoc.* This woman has too many moods.

Volt. Grave fathers,
She is a creature of a most profest
And prostituted lewdness.

Corv. Most impetuous,
Unsatisfied, grave fathers!

Volt May her feignings
Not take your wisdoms: but this day she baited
A stranger, a grave knight, with her loose eyes,
And more lascivious kisses. This man saw them
Together on the water, in a gondola.

Mos Here is the lady herself, that saw them too;
Without; who then had in the open streets
Pursued them, but for saving her knight's honour.

1 *Avoc.* Produce that lady.

2 *Avoc.* Let her come. [*Exit* Mosca.

4 *Avoc.* These things,
They strike with wonder.

3 *Avoc.* I am turn'd a stone.

Corv. Very strange indeed ! She has pretended a fainting fit again.

4 *Avoc.* Stand a little away from her,

1 *Avoc.* (Let her breathe more of the fresh air.

3 *Avoc.* (*To* **Mosca**). What have you got to say ?

Mos. The cuts in my face will give sufficient evidence on my behalf particularly when I went to defend my master against him, who wanted to kill his father and when that well-tutored woman cried out for help pretending that she had been forcibly outraged (by Volpone).

Bon. What a foul and false allegation, fathers !

3 *Avoc.* Sir, please keep quiet. You have had your turn to be listened to ; they also must have their turn to be listened to.

2 *Avoc.* I begin to doubt the truth of the statements of this pretender (Mosca).

4 *Avoc.* This woman seems to suffer from too many states (conditions) of her mind and heart.

Volt. Venerable fathers, she is a very notorious prostitute well-known for her licentious ways of living.

Corv. Most insatiable and uncontrollable in her carnal desires, reverend fathers.

Volt. May you not be misled by her pretensions, wise fathers. It was only today that she succeeded in tempting a knight of a very sober character with her passionate looks and far more licentious kisses. This man (Mosca) saw them together in a pleasure-boat (gondola).

Mos. Here is the lady waiting outside, who also saw them together in the gondola and who chased them in the open streets in order to save the knight from the clutches.

1 *Avoc.* Let that lady appear before us.

2 *Avoc.* Let her appear. [*Exit* **Mosca.**

4 *Avoc.* These things appear to be very strange indeed.

3 *Avoc.* I am literally changed into a stone with wonder to hear this strange case.

Scene VI—Avocatori, *aud* Others.

Re-enter **Mosca** *with* **Lady Would-be.**

Mos. Be resolute, madam.

Lady P. Ay, this same is she. [*Pointing to* **Celia**.
Out, thou camelion harlot ! now thine eyes
Vie tears with the hyaena. Dar'st thou look
Upon my wronged face ?—I cry your pardons.
I fear I have forgettingly transgrest
Against the dignity of the court—

2 *Avoc.* No, madam.

Lady P. And been exorbitant—

2 *Avoc.* You have not, lady.

4 *Avoc.* These proofs are strong.

Lady P. Surely, I had on purpose
To scandalise your honours, or my sex's.

3 *Avoc.* We do believe it.

Lady P. Surly, you may believe it.

2 *Avoc.* Madam, we do.

Lady P. Indeed you may ; my breeding
Is not so coarse—

4 *Avoc.* We know it.

Lady P. To offend
With pertinacy—

3 *Avoc.* Lady—

Lady P. Such a presence !
No surely.

1 *Avoc.* We well think it.

Layd P. You may think it.

1 *Avoc.* Let her o'ercome. What witnesses have you
To make good your report ?

Bon. Our consciences.

Cel. And heaven, that never fails the innocent.

4 *Avoc.* These are no testimonies.

Scene VI—Avocatori, *and Others.*

Re-enter **Mosca** *with* **Lady Would-be.**

Mos. Be determined, madam.

Lady P. The same courtesan is this woman. (*Pointing to* **Celia.** Curse upon you, most changeable prostitute! Your eyes are pretending tears and trying to compete with the hyaena in shedding them (the hyaena is well-known for its laughter, and not for its tears). Do you dare cast your glance at me who have been seriously wronged by you (because my husband has been seduccd by you)? I beg your pardon, reverend fathers, because unconsciously I have gone beyond the etiquette of the court—

2 *Avoc.* No, madam.

Lady P. And I have been unduly emotional—

2 *Avoc.* You have not, madam.

4 *Avoc.* All this evidence (given by various witnesses) is quite convincing,

Lady P. I can assure you that I had no motive to disgrace any woman or to dishonour the dignity of the court.

3 *Avoc.* We trust your words.

Lady P. Surely, you should believe me.

2 *Avoc.* We believe you, madam.

Lady P. Surely, you should believe me because I do not come of a law family—

4 *Avoc.* We know that.

Lady P. I am not born of any low family to commit any breach of decency or politeness.

3 *Avoc.* Madam—

Lady P. In the presence of such venerable fathers, I can never commit any breach of manners or decency or etiquette.

1 *Avoc.* We also think like that.

Lady P. You should think like that.

1 *Avoc.* Let her prevail upon us (*i.e.* let her go on talking). What witnesses can you produce to prove the truth of your statements? (To Bonario and Celia).

Bon. We have no other witnesses except our sense of morality and justice.

Cel. We have God on our side who always protects the innocent.

4 *Avoc.* These are no witnesses or their evidence.

Bon. Not in your courts,
Where multitude, and clamour overcomes.

1 *Avoc.* Nay, then you do wax insolent.

Re-enter Officers, *bearing* **Volpone** *on a couch.*

Volt. Here, here,
The testimony comes, that will convince,
And put to utter dumbness their bold tongues :
See here, grave fathers, here's the ravisher,
The rider on men's wives, the great impostor,
The grand voluptuary ! Do you not think
These limbs should affect venery ? or these eyes
Covet a concubine ? pray you mark these hands ;
Are they not fit to stroke a lady's breasts ?—
Perhaps he doth dissemble !

Bon. So he does.

Volt. Would you have tortured ?

Bon. I would have him proved.

Volt. Best try him then with goads, or burning irons ;
Put him to the strappado : I have heard
The rack hath cured the gout ; 'faith, give it him,
And help him of a malady ; be courteous.
I'll undertake, before these honour'd fathers,
He shall have yet as many left diseases,
As she has known adulterers, or thou strumppets.—
O, my most equal hearers, if these deeds,
Acts of this bold and most exorbitant strain,
May pass with sufferance, what one citizen
But owes the forfeit of his life, yea, fame,
To him that dares traduce him ? which of you
Are safe, my honour'd fathers ? I would ask,
With leave of your grave fatherhoods, if their plot
Have any face or colour like to truth ?

Bon. Not in your courts where noise and fury are treated as evidence.

I Avoc. You are becoming impertinent.

Re-enter Officers, bearing **Volpone** *on a couch.*

Volt. Here comes the witness who will thoroughly convince you and at the same time prove the falsehood of the statements which are likely to be made by the accused (Bonario and Celia) Look here, reverend fathers. here is the person, who has been accused of molesting a young woman, who is alleged to be the outrager of other men's wives, who is branded as a great pretender and also as an extremely licentious debauch. Do you think that such crippled limbs can hold any sexual intercourse : or these rheumy eyes can feast on the limbs of a prostitute ? Look at his palsy hands ; can they caress and fondle a young woman's breasts ? Would you call him a pretender of all his physical disabilities ?

Bon. Yes, he pretends all this.

Volt. Would you put him to physical pains to test his pretensions ?

Bon. I would like to disprove his disabilities (or his pretensions).

Volt. Torture him then with pointed pieces of iron or with red-hot irons ; put him in the rack. I have heard that rheumatic pains have been cured by putting a rheumatic patient in the rack ; so, put him in the rack and cure his disease. Be kind enough to do so, and yet I can say, in presence of the venerable fathers that many of his diseases will remain uncured, as many diseases as she (Celia) has been in touch with the prostitutes. O, my most impartial listeners, if such vices can escape punishment then no citizen will run the risk of being punished even if he slanders others (a man like Volpone) ; and venerable fathers (senators) like yourselves also will not be free from any accusation as this old man (Volpone) has been falsely accused. May I like to know from you, venerable fathers, if there is an truth about the allegations made by these persons against the venerable old man (Volpone) ? Or may I like to know from you if this sort of allegation does not seem to be most

Or if, unto the dullest nostril here,
It smell not rank, and most abhorred slander?
I crave your care of this good gentleman,
Whose life is much endanger'd by their fable;
And as for them, I will conclude with this,
That vicious persons, when they're hot and flesh'd
In impious acts, their constancy abounds;
Damn'd deeds are done with greatest confidence.

1 *Avoc.* Take them to custody, and sever them.

2 *Avoc.* 'Tis pity two such prodigies should live.

1 *Avoc.* Let the old gentleman be return'd with care.
[*Exeunt Officers with* **Volpone.**
I'm sorry our credulity hath wrong'd him.

4 *Avoc.* These are two creatures?

3 *Avoc.* I've an earthquake in me.

2 *Avoc.* Their shame, even in their cradles, fled their faces.

4 *Avoc.* You have done a worthy service to the state, sir.
In their discovery. [*To* **Volt.**

1 *Avoc.* You shall hear, ere night,
What punishment the court decrees upon them.

[*Exeunt Avocat, Not, and Officers with Bonario and Celia.*

Volt. We thank your fatherhoods—How like you it?

Mos. Rare.
I'd have your tongue, sir, tipt with gold for this;
I'd have you be the heir to the whole city;
The earth I'd have want men, ere you want living:
They're bound to erect your statue in St. Mark's.
Signior Corvino, I would have you go
And shew yourself, that you have conquer'd.

nauseating (sickening) even to the most dull-headed and insensitive persons ? I would request you to take care of this good gentleman (Volpone) whose life has been much endangered by the false allegations of these persons (Bonario and Celia). And about these persons I would like to remark that when once vicious persons are initiated to evil deeds, they become more readily inclined to commit evil deeds with greater care and secrecy.

1 *Avoc.* Take them to the lock-up, and separate the man from the woman.

2 *Avoc.* It is really regrettable that such big scoundrels should be permitted to live (*i. e.* they should be put to death for their vices).

1 *Avoc.* Let the old gentleman be conveyed to his place with great care. (*Exeunt Officers with* **Volpone.**

I am really sorry that we too really believed the false accusation made by them (Bonario and Celia), and that is why. we dragged the old crippled man to the court and tortured him thereby.

4 *Avoc.* These (Bonario and Celia) two are really the most hateful creatures.

3 *Avoc.* I am having in my heart a great revulsion of feelings (*i. e.* hatred).

2 *Avoc.* They seem to be shameless since their very childhood.

4 *Avoc.* You have done a great good to the State of Venice, sir, by exposing the scoundrels (Bonario and Celia). [*To* **Voltore.**

1 *Avoc.* You will come to know before this night what punishment is awarded to them.

Exeunt **Avocat. Not,** *and Officers with* **Bonario** *and* **Celia.**

Volt. We thank you reverend fathers—How did you like my performance ?

Mos. Wonderful. I would like to have your tongue covered with gold for your wonderful eloquence. I would like you to be the successor to all the wealth and property of the whole city of Venice. I would like all the people in the world to die to make room for you to exist in it. The people are sure to build your statue in St. Mark's Square. Mr. Corvino, you should better go and feel that you have won the case (by declaring yourself a cuckold or the husband of a faithless wife).

Corv. Yes.
Mos. It was much better that you should profess
Yourslf a cuckold thus, than that the other
Should have been proved.
Corv. Nay, I consider'd that.
Now it is her fault.
Mos. Then it had been yours.
Corv. True ; I do doubt this advocate still.
Mos. I'faith.
You need not, I dare ease you of that care.
Corv. I trust thee, Mosca. [*Exit.*
Mos. As your own soil, sir.
Corb. Mosca !
Mos. Now for your business, sir.
Corb. How ! have you business ?
Mos. Yes, your's sir.
Corb. O, none else ?
Mos. None else, not I.
Corb. Be careful, then.
Mos. Rest you with both your eyes, sir.
Corb. Dipatch it.
Mos. Instantly.
Corb. And look that all.
Whatever, be put in, jewels, moneys.
Household stuff, bedding, curtains.
Mos. Curtain-rings, sir :
Only the advocate's fee must be deducted.
Corb. I'll pay him now ; you'll be too prodigal,
Mos Sir, I must tender it.
Corb. Two chequines is well.
Mos. No, six, sir.
Corb. 'Tis too much.
Mos. He talk'd a great while ;
You must consider that, sir.
Corb. Well, there's three—
Mos I'll give it him.
Corb. Do so, and there's for thee. *Exit.*

Corv. Yes, I shall do so.

Mos. It would have been much better if you had declared yourself in the court as the husband of a faithless woman rather than your wife should have been proved to be really faithless.

Corv. I also thought like that ; but then, it is her fault.

Mos. But the fault was yours in the court (to declare your wife to be a faithless woman).

Corv. You are right ; but I suspect this lawyer even now.

Mos. Surely, you must not suspect him, because I venture to remove your suspicion.

Corv. I believe you, Mosca.

Mos. Believe me as much as you would believe yourself.

Corv. Mosca ?

Mos. Now let me talk to you, sir.

Corv. But have you got any business with me ?

Mos. Yes, your business.

Corv. Is it all my business, and of none else ?

Mos. Of nobody else, I can assure you.

Corv. Take particular care then.

Mos You can close both of your eyes, sir (*i. e.* sleep without any fear).

Corv. Execute it (the will).

Mos. Immediately.

Corv. Just see that in the will everything is mentioned such as jewels, plates, coins, household furniture, bedding, curtains ete —

Mos. I will include curtain rings also ; but then, the lawyer's fees have to be deducted.

Corv. I will pay the lawyer because you are likely to pay him unduly.

Mos. No, sir ; I must pay him.

Corv. Then, pay him two chequines only.

Mos. No, he should be paid six chequines.

Corv. But that is too much.

Mos. You must consider that he has spoken for a long time.

Corv. Well, then pay him three chequines.

Mos. I will pay him the amount.

Corv. Yes, do so, and take this money for yourself. [*Exit.*

Mos. Bountiful bones ! What horrid strange offence
Did he commit 'gainst nature, in his youth.
Worthy this age ? [*Aside.*]—you see, sir [*To Volt*] how I work
Unto your ends : take you no notice.

Volt. No,
I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Mos. All is yours, the devil and all:
Good advocate !—Madam, I'll bring you home.

Lady P. No, I'll go see your patron.

Mos. That you shall not ;
I'll tell you why. My purpose is to urge
My patron to reform his will ; and for
The zeal you have shewn to-day, whereas before
You were but third or fourth, you shall be now
Put in the first : which would appear as begg'd
If you were present. Therefore

Lady P. You shall sway me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

Scene I—*A Room in* Volpone's *House.*

Enter **Volpone**

Volp. Well, I am here, and all this brunt is past
I ne'er was in dislike with my disguise
Till this fled moment: here't was good in private ;
But in your public,—*cave* whilst I breathe.
'Fore God, my left leg 'gan to have the cramp,
And I apprehended straight some power had sturck me
With a dead palsy : Well ! I must be merry,
And shake it off. A many of these fears
Would put me into some villainous disease,
Should they come thick upon me: I'll prevent 'em.
Give me a bowl of lusty wine, to fright
This humour from my heart. [*Drinks*]—Hum, hum, hum ?
'Tis almost gone already ; I shall conquer.
Any device, now, of rare ingenious knavery,
That would possess me with a violent laughter,
Would make me up again. [*Drinks again*]—So, so, so, so !
This heat is life ; 'tis blood by this time :—Mosca !

Mos. How generous this old creature is ! He must have committed many foul crimes or sins in his younger days ; otherwise how could he be like this ? (*Aside*)—You see, sir (*To Voltore*) how I work for your interest, you do not seem to take any notice of it.

Volt. No, I will take leave of you. [*Exit.*

Mos. Everything is yours—the devil and all ; good lawyer: —Madam, may I escort you to your place ? (To Lady P.)

Lady P. No, I shall go and meet your master.

Mos. You must not go to meet my master ; I will give you the reasons for it. My motive is to request my master to change his will a little. Formerly, your position in the list of the prospective successors was either the third or the fourth ; but because of your great enthusiasm in the court, your name shall be put first in the list ; and therefore, if you go to look up my master now, it will appear that you have gone there to beg his favour (to change your position in the list of the successors).

Lady P. You shall go with me. (*Exeunt.*

ACT V

Scene I—*A Room in* Volpone's *House.*

Enter Volpone.

Volp. I am again in my house, and all the trouble is now over. I never hated my guise (dress of pretension) so much in my life as I hated just a moment ago. In the house. I did not mind putting on this guise; but to wear it in public was actually choking my breath, and surely, feared that my left leg got such an attack of numbness that I feared that some power had struck me with the disease of paralysis. Well, now I must be cheerful and try to forget the attack of the disease ; because otherwise many a fear of the disease would actually make me a victim of the disease. I will prevent its attack. Let me drink a glass of vigorous wine in order to chase away the fear of the disease from my heart. (*Drinks*)—yes, well, yes, the fear has almost disappeared. Surely, I shall get rid of this fear. Any wicked plan which is impossible to work out will cheer up my spirit. This warmth of the wine is life itself, and it has been immediately converted into my life-energy. (Mosca !

Scene II—Volpone.

Enter **Mosca.**

Mos. How now, Sir ? does the day look clear again ?
Are we recover'd, and wrought out of error,
Into our way, to see our path before us ?
Is our trade free once more ?
Volp. Exquisite Mosca !
Mos. Was it not carried learnedly ?
Volp. And stoutly :
Good wits are greatest in extremities.
Mos. It were a folly beyond thought, to trust
Any grand act unto a cowardlly spirit :
You are not taken with it enough, methinks.
Volp. O, more than if I had enjoy'd the wench :
The pleasure of all woman-kind's not like it.
Mos. Why now you speak, sir. We must here be fix'd ;
Here we must rest ; this is our master piece ;
We cannot think to go beyond this.
Volp. True.
Thou hast play'd the prize, my precious Mosca.
Mos. Nay, sir,
To gull the court—
Volp. And quite divert the torrent
Upon the innocent
Mos. Yes, and to make
So rare a music out of discords.
Volp. Right.
That yet to me's the strangest, how thou hast borne it !
That these, being so divided 'mongst themselves,
Should not scent somewhat, or in me or thee,
Or doubt their own side.

Scene II—Volpone.

Enter **Mosca.**

Mos. How are you feeling, sir? Do you feel absolutely free from the fear of the trouble in which had been placed? Have you got back your former mood, and do you feel that you are no longer in that wrong path as once we were; so that we can now clearly see what line of action we should adopt?

Volp. Mosca, you are really wonderful.

Mos. Was not the thing executed quite cleverly?

Volp. Quite vigorously (bravely). Persons with good brains show their greatest skill in the execution of things particularly at a crisis.

Mos. It would have been an act of great stupidity if the job were entrusted to a timid person, and not to a brave person like Voltore. You do not seem to have been impressed by his power of execution.

Volp. I would have been far more impressed if I could enjoy that woman (Celia) who is more enjoyable than any other woman in the world.

Mos. Now you can express your heart, sir; we should put a stop now to our speculations or activities because this is the climax of our achievement, and we should not think of proceeding further.

Volp. You are right; you have played your part marvellously, Mosca.

Mos. No, sir, I did all this only to make a fool of the senators (the court).

Volp. And you diverted also the tide against the innocent persons (*i.e.* Celia and Bonario).

Mos. Yes, all this I did only to produce harmony out of disharmony (*i e.* to set the wrong right).

Volp. Quite true. But then, it seems really strange to me how you managed to bring together all the persons and to conduct them in such a manner that they did not suspect either me or you or themselves in spite of sheir conflicting interests.

Mos. True, they will not see't.
Too much light blinds them, I think. Each of them
Is so possest and stuft with his own hopes,
That any thing unto the contrary,
Never so true, or never so apparent,
Never so palpable, they will resist it—

Volp. Like a temptation of the devil.

Mos. Right, sir.
Merchants may talk of trade, and your great signiors
Of land that yields well ; but if Italy
Have any glebe more fruitful than these fellows,
I am deceiv'd. Did not your advocate rare.

Volp. O—*My most honour'd fathers, my grave fathers,*
Under correction of your fatherhoods,
What face of truth is here ? If these strange deeds
May pass, most honour'd fathers—I had much ado
To forbear laughing.

Mos. It seem'd to me, you sweat, sir.

Volp. In truth, I did a little.

Mos. But confess, sir,
Were you not daunted ?

Volp. In good faith, I was
A little in a mist, but not dejected ;
Never, but still myself.

Mos. I think it, sir
Now, so truth help me, I must needs say this, sir,
And out of conscience for your advocate,
He has taken pains, in faith, sir, and deserv'd
In my poor judgment, I speak it under favour,
Not to contrary you, sir, very richly—
Well—to be cozen'd,

Volp. Truth, and I think so too.
By that I heard him, in the latter end.

Mos. O, but before, sir : had you heard him first
Draw it to certain heads, then aggravate.
Then use his vehement figures—I look'd still
When he would shift a shirt and, doing this
Out of pure love, no hope of gain—

Mos. It is true that they could not detect the secret (*i.e.*, our trick) because too much of light (too much thought of gold) makes one blind. They were all so much occupied with the thought of the inheritance of your wealth that they could not notice or believe or understand anything however distinct and simple the things might appear to be.

Volp. Just as one grows blind when one is tempted by some-thing evil.

Mos. Quite true, sir ; so far Italy is concerned, there may be much of wealth due to trade and commerce or due to the produce of lands; but then, so far fools are concerned, there is no other part of Italy where one can find such great fools (as Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, Sir Politick Would-be and Lady Politick Would-be). Did not the Lawyer (Voltore) play his part marvellously ?

Volp. I could not resist my laughter when the lawyer addressed the senators like this, 'My most venerable fathers, my wise fathers, subject to your judgment, may I question the truth of the statements of these persons (Celia and Bonario) ?'

Mos. It appeared that you perspired, sir (while you were brought into the court.'

Volp. Yes, I perspired slightly.

Mos. But tell me, sir, if you were not frightened.

Volp. Honestly speaking, I was slightly puzzled but not sad. I never lost my mental composure or ease.

Mos. I agree with you, sir. Now let me speak the truth ; honestly speaking, without being partial or without contradicting you I must confess that your lawyer took sufficient pains and did not deserve to be cheated.

Volp. Quite true ; I also think like that although I heard only the latter part of his arguments in the court.

Mos. But I wish you had heard the former part of his speech, how he used the flugures of speech, how he warmed them up to a pitch. I felt and kept waiting that due to hot speech he would perspire and change his shirt. He did his part out of sheer love for you and not out of any desire to gain.

Volp. 'Tis right.
I cannot answer him, Mosca, as I would,
Not yet ; but for thy sake, at thy entreaty,
I will begin, even now—to vex them all,
This very instant.

Mos. Good sir.

Volp. Call the dwarf.
And eunuch forth.

Mos. Castrone, Nano !

Enter **Castrone** *and* **Nauo.**

Nano. Here.

Volp. Shall we have a jig now ?

Mos. What you please, sir.

Volp. Go.
Straight give out about the streets, you two,
That I am dead ; do it with constancy,
Sadly, do you hear ? Impute it to the grief
Of this later slander. [*Exeunt* **Gas.** *and* **Nano.**

Mos. What do you mean, sir ?

Volp. O,
I shall have instantly my Vulture, Crow,
Raven, come flying hither, on the news,
To peck for carrion, my she-wolf, and all,
Greedy, and full of expectation—

Mos. And then to have it ravish'd from their mouths ?

Volp. 'Tis true. I will have thee put on a gown,
And take upon thee as thou wert mine heir :
Shew them a will : Open that chest, and reach
Forth one of those that has the blanks ; I'll straight
Put in they name.

Mos. It will be rare, sir. [*Gives him a paper.*

Volp. Ay,
When they ev'n gape, and find themselves deluded—

Mos. Yes.

Volp. And thou use them scurvily !
Dispatch, get on thy gown.

Mos. [*putting on a gown*]. But what, sir, if they ask
After the body ?

Volp. Say, it was corrupted.

Volp. It is true that I can not reward him properly (or compete with him in his power of speech or eloquence) Yet for your sake I would like to give him preferance (in the matter of inheritance) above all other candidates.

Mos. Well, sir.

Volp. Send for the eunuch and the dwarf immediately.

Mos. Castrone, Nano !

Enter **Castrone** *and* **Nano.**

Nano. Here I am

Volp. Shall we have some farce (vulgar humour) now ?

Mos. Whatever you may be pleased to demand.

Volp Go out immediately two of you (Nano and Castrone) and tell all people in the streets that I am dead. Spread this rumour with sad looks in your face so that people may believe you. Tell the people that my death occurred due to the disgrace and insult I suffered in the court of law. [*Exeunt* **Nano** *and* **Castrone.**

Mos. What is your actual intention, sir ?

Volp The moment, the rumour of my death will spread, Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, Lady Politick Would-be —all would come flying to my house just like vultures, ravens, crows and wolves in order to feed on my dead body with expectations of inheriting my propertry.

Mos. And then, you want to snatch away the food (*i.e.* the legacy of your wealth and property) from their mouths

Volp. Quite right. I will make you put on a gown so that you may look like my successor. You should show them (Voltore, Corbaccio and others) a will. Open that chest and get one of the blank forms of the will ; I want to put your name on it immediately.

Mos. It is a wonderful idea, sir. [*Gives him a paper.*

Volp. When they will have a look at the will they will open their mouths with wonder and find that they have all been duped (deceived).

Mos. Yes.

Volp. And you should behave with them shabbily. Be quick ; put on the gown.

Mos. (*Putting on the gown*). But if they enquire about your dead body what should I say ?

Volp. Say that it was getting decomposed.

Mos. I'll say, it stunk, sir ; and was fain to have it
Coffin'd up instantly, and sent away.

Volp. Any thing; what thou wilt Hold, here's my, will.
Get thee a cap, a count-book, pen and ink,
Papers afore thee ; sit as thou went taking
An inventory of parcels : I'll get up
Behind the curtain, on a stool, and hearken ;
Sometime peep over, see how they do look,
With what degrees their blood doth leave their faces,
O, 'twill afford me a rare meal of laughter !

Mos (*putting on a cap, and setting out the table, etc.*) You
advocate will turn stark dull upon it.

Volp. It will take off his oratory's edge.

Mos. But your clarissimo, old round-back, he
Will crump you like a hog-louse, with the touch.

Volp. And what Corvino ?

Mos. O, sir, look for him,
To-morrow morning, with a rope and dagger,
To visit all the streets ; he must run mad,
My lady too, that came into the court,
To bear false witness for your worship--

Volp Yes,
And kiss'd me 'fore the fathers, when my face
Flow'd all with oils.

Mos. And sweat. sir. Why, your gold
Is such another med'cine, it dries up
All those offensive savours ; it transforms
The most deformed, and restores them lovely
As 'twere the strange poetical girdle. Jove
Could not invent t' himself a shroud more subtle
To pass Acrisius' guards. It is the thing
Makes all the world her grace, her youth, her beaty,

Mos. I will tell them that the body was giving out a foul smell; and that is why. it was immediateiy put in a coffin and sent away.

Volp. You can speak anything whatever you like. Just get hold of my will. Just put on a cap; secure an account book, pen and ink: and take your seat in such a manner as if you were making a list of the parcels of articles. I will take my stand on a stool behind the screen and then listen to the talk between you and them. Sometimes, I shall peep over the screen and see how they look or how they slowly grow pale. What a great pleasure I shall derive from such a situation.

Mos. (putting on a cap, and setting out the table etc.) Your lawyer will be stunned to see the whole thing.

Volp. It will rob him of his power of speech (or eloquence which he displayed so much in the law court).

Mos. But your Venetian nobleman (Corbaccio) who is hunch back will at once curl up like a wood-house at the very touch (sight of the will).

Volp. And what about Corvino?

Mos. Just wait for him till tomorrow; when you will find him going about in all the streets of Venice like a mad man with a rope and a dagger in his hand. My Lady Would be also will go mad who came to the court to give a false evidence on your behalf.

Volp. Yes, she kissed me in presence of the senator's When my face was over flowing with oil.

Mos. And also with sweat, sir. But then, gold is such a magic drug that it dries up (makes one forget) all the bad smell, and also makes a crippled and diseased person perfectly healthy and attractive; it works like the magic belt (mentioned in Greak mythology or Greek poetry), which lends beauty and revives lost love. Even Jove could not invent any better magic than this belt (zone or castus) which he invented when he entered the tower in a gold shower, where, Danse was confined, inorder to make her the mother of Parscus, who killed Aerisius. Gold is the magic power that lends beauty, youth and charm to everybody in the world (however one may be deformed, wretched and ugly in body and mind).

Volp. I think she loves me.
Mos. When I the lady, sir?
She's jealous of you.
Volp. Dost thou say so! [*Knocking within.*
Mos. Hark.
There's some already.
Volp. Look.
Mos. It is the Vulture;
He has the quickest scent.
Volp. I'll to my place.
Thou to thy posture. [*Goes behind the curtain.*
Mos. I am set.
Volp. But, Mosea,
Play the artificer now, torture them rarely.

Scene III—Volpone, Mosca.

Enter **Voltore.**

Volt. How now, my Mosca?
Mos. [writing] *Turkey carpets, nine—*
Volt. Taking an inventory! that is well.
Mos. *Two suits of bedding, tissue—*
Volt. Where's the Will?
Let me read that the while.

Enter **Servants,** *with* **Corbaccio** *in a chair.*

Corb. So set me down.
And get you home. [*Exeunt Servants.*
Volt. Is he come now, to trouble us?
Mos. *Of cloth of gold, two more—*
Corb. Is it done, Mosca?
Mos. *Of several velvets eight—*
Volt. I like his care.
Corb. Dost thou not hear?

Enter **Corvino.**

Corb. Ha! is the hour come, Mosca.
Volp. [*peeping over the curtain.*] Ay, now they muster.
Corv. What does the advocate here,
Or this Corbaccio?
Corb. What do these here?

Volp. I believe, she (Lady Would-be) loves me.

Mos. Do you mean Lady Politick, sir? She is unduly fond of you.

Volp. Do you really believe like that ? [*Knocking within.*

Mos. Listen ? Some people have already arrived.

Volp. Just see who they are.

Mos. It is the vulture (Voltore) that can smell the dead body much ahead of any other creature. (Cf. 'Vultures fly in the wake of death').

Volp. I shall take my stand behind the screen while you also take your seat in the manner, I have already auggested. [*Goes behind the curtain.*

Mos. I am quite ready, sir.

Volp. But, Mosca, play a very cunning fellow and give them pain as much as possible.

Scene I1I—Volpone, Mosca.

Enter **Voltore.**

Volt. What are you doing, Mosca ?

Mos. (*writing*) Turkey carpets, nine—

Volt. Are you preparing a list of the articles ? That's good.

Mos. Two suits of bedding, tissue—

Volt. Where is the Will ? Let me have a look at the Will in the meanwhile.

Enter Servants, with **Corbaccio** *in a chair.*

Corb. So, place me on the ground, and you better go home. [*Exeunt Servants.*

Volt. Has he (Corbaccio) come at this moment only to create troubles for us ?

Mos. Of cloth of gold, two more—

Corb. Is the will ready, Mosca ?

Mos. Of several velvets, eight—

Voli. I appreciate the care he is taking in counting the articles.

Corb. Do you not hear me ?

Enter **Corvino.**

Corb. He ? Has the happy moment arrived, Mosca ?

Volp. (*peeping over the curtain*) Yes, now they are gathering.

Corv. What business Voltore or Corbaccio has here ?

Enter **Lady Pol. Would-be**

Lady P. Mosca !
Is his thread spun ?
Mos. *Eight chests of linen—*
Volp. O.
My fine dame Would-be, too !
Corv. Mosca, the Will,
That I may shew it these, and rid them hence,
Mos. *Six chests of diaper, four of damask.*—There.
[*Gives them the Will carelessly, over his shoulder.*
Corb. Is that the Will !
Mos. *Down-beds and bolsters—*
Volp. Rare !
Be busy still. Now they begin to flutter :
They never think of me, Look, see, see, see !
How their swift eyes run over the long deep,
Unto the name, and to the legacies,
What is bequeathed them there—
Mos. *Ten suits of hangings—*
Volp Ay, in their garters, Mosca. Now their hopes
Are at the gasp.
Vol:. Mosca the heir !
Corb What's that ?
Volp. My advocate is dumb ; look to my merchant,
He has heard of some strange storm, a ship is lost,
He faints ; my lady will swoon. Old glazen eyes,
He hath not reach'd his despair yet.
Corb. All these
Are out of hope ; I am, sure, the man. [*Takes the Will*
Coab. But, Mosca—
Mos. *Two cabinets.*
Corv. Is this in earnest ?
Mos. *One*
Of ebony—
Corv. Or do you but delude me ?
Mos *The other, mother of pearl*—I am very busy.
Good faith, it is a fortune thrown upon me—
Item one salt of agate—not my seeking.

Enter **Lady Pol. Would-be**

Lady P. Mosca ? Is he (Volpone) really dead ?

Mos. Eight chests of linen—

Volp. O, my fine Lady Would-be also has come ?

Corv. Let me have the will so that I may show it to them and thereby drive them away from here (because they will find that I have been appointed the successor).

Mos. Six chests of diaper, four of damask,—There you can find the will. (*Gives them the will carelessly, over his shoulder.*

Corv. Is that the Will ?

Mos. Down-beds and bolsters—

Volp. Wonderful ? Go on showing yourself busy even now. See how their eyes are quickly glancing through the will in order to discover their names and also the articles which have been gifted to them in it.

Mos. Ten suits of hangings—

Volp. Now they are just going to lose their balance : their hopes are now breathing their last.

Volt. Mosca has been appointed the successor !

Corv. What do you say ?

Volp. The lawyer has lost his power of speech ; look at Corbaccio he has got the news that his merchant ship has been lost by some storm in the sea ; he is falling into a fainting-fit ; Lady Would-be also is going to fall into a fainting-fit. The eyes of Corbaccio are weak, or dazzled and he has not yet been able to see the name of the successor in the will.

Corb. All these persons have lost their hope. I am sure, I have been appointed the successor. [*Takes the Will*

Corv. But, Mosca—

Mos. Two cabinets—

Corv. Is he (Mosca) seriously taking down the list of the articles ?

Mos. One of ebony

Corb. Do you really want to deceive me ?

Mos. The other (cabint) is made of the mother of pearl (oyster) I am very busy (*i. e.* I have no time to talk to you). Surely, a fortune has been thrust upon me (*i. e.* I was never a candidate for it),—Item, one salt of agate—I never tried to get the fortune.

Lady P. Do you hear, sir ?
Mos. *A perfumed box*—'Pray you forbear,
You see I'm troubled—*made of an onyx*—
Lady P. How !
Mos. To-morrow or next day, I shall, be at leisure
To talk with you all.
Corv. Is this my large hope's issue ?
Lady P. Sir, I must have a fairer answer.
Mos. Madam !
Marry, and shall : 'pray you, fairly quit my house.
Nay, raise no tempest with your looks ; but hark you,
Remember what your ladyship offer'd me
To put you in an heir ; go to, think on it :
And what you said e'en your best madams did
For maintenance ; any why not you ? Enough,
Go home, and use the poor Sir Pol, your knight, well,
For fear I tell some riddles ; go, be melancholy.
[*Exit* **Lady Would-be.**
Volp. O, my fine devil !
Corv. Mosca, 'pray you a word.
Mos. Lord ! will you not take your dispatch hence yet ?
Methinks, of all, you should have been the example.
Why should you stay here ? with what thought, what promise ?
Hear you ; do you not know, I know you an ass,
And that you would most fain have been a wittol,
If fortune would have let you ? that you are
A declared cuckold, on good terms ? This pearl,
You'll say, was yours ? right : this diamond ?
I'll not deny't but thank you. Much here else ?
It may be so. Why think that these good works
May help to hide your bad. I'll not betray you ;
Although you be but extraordinary,
And have it only in title, it sufficeth :
Go home, be melancholy too, or mad. *Exit Corvino.*

Lady P. Do you listen to me, sir ?

Mos. A perfumed box—Please do not disturb me ; don't you see, I am very busy ? made of an onyx (a kind of hard marble which has layers of colour in it).

Lady P. What do you mean ?

Mos. Tomorrow or the day after, I shall have time to talk to you all.

Corv. Is this the result of all my bright hopes ?

Lady P. I must heve a more polite reply from you.

Mos. Madam, yes you will positively get a polite reply ; please leave my house quietly ; do not create any disturbance by your frowns ; but listen to me : do not forget what you told me (*i. e.* you offered yourself to be my private mistress if you were appointed successor to Volpone) ; don't talk any more but think of what you told me which, of course even the best women of your class (*i. e.* prostitutes) would say (or would do) in order to maintain their existence in the world. You have talked enough. Go home now and treat well your husband, Sir Politick ; otherwise I will tell him what you have told me. Go and be sad. [*Exit* **Lady Would-be.**

Λolp. O, my wonderful devil !

Corv. Mosca, please liten to a word from me.

Mos. Good God ! Will you not get away from this place even now ? In my opinion, you should have been the first to depart from this place. Why are you waiting ? What is your purpose or motive ? Listen to me. If you do not know, I know you to be a big fool. You would have been a great cuckold if Fate had not interfered (*i e.*, if Bonario had not preventer Volpone from outraging Celia). You have been declared a cuckold with a good understanding with your wife You will say, this pearl belonged to you ; this diamond also belonged to you : I will not refuse to accept any of them. Thank you for all your presents. Do you think these presents are too many? But take them to be good means of hiding your bad deeds. I will not expose you ; because you are a cuckold only in name. Go home and be either sad or mad. [*Exit* **Corvino.**

Nolp. Rare Mosca ! how his villainy becomes him !
Volt. Certain he doth delude all these for me.
Corb. Mosca the heir !
Volp. O, his four eyes have found it.
Corb. I am cozen'd, cheated, by a parasite slave ;
Harlot, thou hast gull'd me.
Mos. Yes, sir. Stop your mouth.
Or I shall draw the only tooth is left.
Are not you he, that filthy covetous wretch,
With the three legs, that here, in hope of prey,
Have, any time this three years, snuff'd about;
With your most grovelling nose, and would have hired
Me to the poisoning of my patron, sir ?
Are not you he that have to-day in court
Profess'd the disinheriting of your son ?
Perjured yourself ? Go home and die, and stink.
If you but croak a syllable, all comes out :
Away, and call your porters ! *Exit* [**Corbaccio**] Go, go, stink.
Volp. Excellent varlet !
Volt. Now, my faithful Mosca,
I find thy constancy.
Mos. Sir !
Volt. Sincere.
Mos. [writing.] *A table*
Of porphyry—I marle you'll be thus troublesome.
Volt. Nay leave off now, they are gone.
Mos. Why, who are you ?
What ! who did send for you ? O, cry you mercy,
Reverend sir ! Good faith, I am grieved for you,
That any chance of mine should thus defeat
Your (I must needs say) most deserving travails :
But I protest, sir, it was cast upon me.
And I could almost wish to be without it,
But that the will o' the dead must be observ'd.
Marry, my joy is that you need it not ;
You have a gift, sir, (thank your education),
Will never let you want, while there are men.
And malice, to breed causes. Would I had

Volp. Wonderful Mosca ! how his wickedness adorns him !

Volt. Surely, he is deceiving all other persons for my sake (*i e.* to tell me afterwards that I alone am the real successor to Volpone).

Corb. Mosca has been appointed the successor ?

Volp. O, his blind eyes have discovered at last that Mosca is the successor and not he.

Corb. I am deceived, cheated, by a mean hanger-on. Rascal, you have fooled me.

Mos. Yes sir, shut up, or I shall knock out the only tooth left in your mouth. Are you not that dirty greedy creature who have been for the last three years coming here with a prop in your hand and suggesting to me that I should poison my master so that you may sooner be the successor to his wealth and property ? Are you not that hateful creature, who this very day in the court of law disinherited your own son and thereby disgraced yourself ? Go home and die and let your dead body give out a foul smell of decomposition. If you speak a syllable more, I shall expose you immediately. Call your bearers and go home and die and give out a foul smell from your dead body. [*Exit* **Corbaccio.**

Volp. Very well done my faithful attendant.

Volp. Now, my faithfull Mosca, I can find your sincerity and faithfulness.

Mos. Sir !

Volt. Sincere indeed !

Mos. (*writing*) A table of porphyry—I find that you are disturbing me.

Volt. No, you better give up preparing the list now ; they all gone away.

Mos. Who are you to say like that ? Who called you here? O, I beg your pardon, venerable sir. I am really sorry for you that my fortune should deprive you of your fortune in spite of all your deserving toil or labour. But I assure you that this fortune was thrust upon me ; and I would have refused it had it not been laid down in the will of a man who is now dead. My satisfaction is that you do not need this fortune, because you possess a talent by which you can earn any amount of wealth so long men bear malice.

But half the like, for all my fortune, sir !
If I have any suits, as I do hope,
Things being so easy and direct, I shall not,
I will make bold with your obstreperous aid.
Conceive me.—for your fee, sir," In mean time.
You that have so much law, I know have the conscience
Not to be covetous of what is mine.
Good sir, I thank you for my plate ; 'It will help.
To set up a young man. Good faith, you look
As you were costive ; best go home and purge, sir,
[*Exit* Voltore.

Volp. [*comes from behind the curtain*]. Bid him eat lettucc well.
My witty mischief.
Let me embrace thee O, that I could now.
Transform thee to a Venus !—Mosca, go.
Straight take my habit of clarissimo.
And Walk the streets ; be seen. torment them more ;
We must pursue, as well as plot. Who would.
Have lost this feast ?

Mos. I doubt it will lose them.

Volp O, my recovery shall recover all.
That I could now but think on some disguise
To meet them in, and ask them questions :
How I would vex them still at every turn ?

Mos. Sir, I can fit you.

Volp. Canst thou ?

Mos. Yes, I know
One o' the commandadori, sir, so like you ;
Him will I straight make drunk, and bring you his habit.

Volp. A rare disguise, and answering thy brain !
O, I will be a sharp disease unto them.

Mos. Sir, you must look for curses—

Volp. Till They burst .
The Fox fares ever best when he is curst. [*Exeunt.*

(enmity) to one another. If I possessed half of your talent I would have agreed to give up all my fortune, If I have any case to institute in a court of law, although under the present circumstances I am not likely to have any occasion for that, I shall surely engage your services as a lawyer. I should, therefore like to know your fees for pleading cases. In the meanwhile, you who have so much of the legal knowledge and sense should not be greedy of my fortune, I thank you for the gift of the plate ; it will be sufficient to establish a young man in his life (it is so costly). Surely, you look as if you are suffering from constipation : you should better go home and take a purgative, sir. [*Exit* **Voltore**.

Volp. (*comes from behind the curtain*), Ask him to take lettuce also (which is a good purgative). My wonderfully mischievous darling ; let me embrace you. I wish, I could change you into the goddess of beauty ? Mosca go immediately and put on my Venetian dress of the nobleman and parade yourself in the streets so that you may be seen by them (the disappointed candidates for the inheritance) and also that they may feel extremely pained at heart. We must go on plotting further (against them). Who can resist the temptation of enjoying such a fun ?

Mos. I am afraid, your making fun of them will make you lose them.

Volp. O, I shall get back everything if I recover from my sickness. I wish, I could devise some kind of disguise in which I could tease them without being detected. I would like to tease them at every step with questions.

Mos. Sir, I can put you in such a dress.

Volp. Can you really ?

Mos. Yes, I know one of the military officers (*i*, *e*. a sergeant) who resembles you, I will immediateiy get him drunk and snatch the uniform from him.

Volp. A wonderful dress indeed, perfectly doing credit to your inventive brain. O, I shall be a source of constant torture to them.

Mos Sir, you must expect curses in return from them.

Volp. Yes, they will curse me till their lungs explode. A wicked person enjoys the most when he is cursed.

Exeunt.

Scene IV—*A Hall in* Sir Politick's *House.*

Enter **Peregrine** *disguised, and three* **Merchants.**

Per. Am I enough disguised ?
1 *Mer.* I warrant you.
Per. All my ambition is to fright him only.
2 *Mer.* If you could ship him away, 'twere excellent.
3 *Mer.* To Zant, or to Aleppo ?
Per. Yes, and have his.
Adventures put i' the Book of Voyages,
And his gull'd story register'd for truth.
Well, gentlemen, when I am in a while.
And that you think us warm in our discourse.
Know your approaches.
1 *Mer.* Trust it to our care. [*Exeunt* **Merchants.**

Enter **Waiting woman.**

Per. Save you, fair lady ! Is Sir Pol. within ?
Wom. I do not know, sir.
Per. Pray you say unto him,
Here is a merchant, upon earnest business,
Desires to speak with him.
Wom. I will see sir. [*Exit.*
Per. Pray you.—
I see the family is all female here.

Re-enter **Waiting-woman.**

Wom. He says, sir, he has weighty affair of state.
That now require him whole ; some other time
You may possess him.
Per. Pray you say again,
If those require him whole, these will exact him.
Whereof I bring him tidings. [*Exit Woman*]—What might be
His grave affair of state now ! how to make
Bolognian sauages here in Venice, sparing
One o' the ingredients ?

Re enter—**Waiting-woman**

Wom. Sir, he says, he knows
By your word *tidings*, that you are no statesman.
And therefore wills you stay.

Scene II—*A Hall in* **Sir Politick's** *House.*
Enter **Peregrine** *disguised and three* **Merchants.**

Per. Am I sufficiently concealed iu my dress ?

1 *Mer.* I assure you of that.

Per. My real motive is to frighten him (Sir Politick).

2 *Mer.* If you could make him leave Venice, it would have been the best.

3 *Mer.* Send him away to Zante (A Venetian possession in Greece) or to Aleppo (Syria, a great trade centre).

Per. Yes, let his commercial enterprises be registered in the Book of Voyages and his foolish story be recorded as a true story. Well gentlemen, when in a short while you find me busy with him (Sir Politick) in my talk, you should be ready for meeting him.

1 *Mer,* Depend on us for that. [*Exeunt Merchants.*

Enter **Waiting woman**

Per. God save you, good lady ! Is Sir Politick staying in the house ?

Wom. I am not aware, sir.

Per. Please tell him that a merchant on some urgent business wants to meet him.

Wom. I will enquire, sir.

Per. Please you—I find that the family here is all ladies (women).

Re-enter **Waiting woman.**

Wom. He says that he has got some important government job in his hand, which is keeping him busy ; and therefore, you can meet him some other time

Per. Please tell him again that if those state affairs keep him busy, the business of the merchant would engage his time entirely. I have brought for him some important news. (*Exit* **woman**— What important state affairs engage him at this hour ? Is it how to prepare one of the Italian sausages with, of course, some of the elements missing from the sausage ?

Re-enter **Waiting-woman.**

Wom. Sir, he says that by the use of your word 'tidings' and not intelligence', it is clear that you are not a political agent ; and therefore. you will have to wait.

Per. Sweet, pray you return him ;
I haxe not read so many proclamations,
And studied them for words, as he has done—
But—here he deigns to come. [*Exit* **Woman.**

Enter **Sir Politick.**

Sir P. I must crave.
Your courteous pardon. There hath chanced to-day,
Unkind disaster 'twixt my lady and me ;
And I was penning my apology,
To give her satisfaction as you came now.

Per. Sir, I am grieved I bring you worse disaster :
The gentleman you met at the port to-day,
That told you, he was newly arrived—

Sir P. Ay, was
A fugitive punk ?

Per. No, Sir, a spy set on you ;
And he was made relation to the senate,
That you profest to him to have a plot
To sell the State of Venice to the Turk.

Sir P. O me !

Per. For which, warrants are sign'd by this time,
To apprehend you, and to search your study
For papers—

Sir P. Alas, sir, I have none, but notes
Drawn out of play-books—

Per. All the better, sir.

Sir P. And some essays. What Shall I do ?

Per. Sir, best
Convey yourself into a sugar-chest ;
Or, if you could lie round, a frail were rare,
And I could send you abroad.

Sir P. Sir, I but talk'd so,
For discourse sake merely. [*Knocking within.*

Per. Hark ! they are there.

Sir P. I am a wretch, a wretch !

Per. What will you do, sir ?
Have you ne'er a currant-butt to leap into ?
They'll put you to the rack ; you must be sudden.

Per. Dear lady, please tell him in reply that I have not read so many political announcements nor have I studied them only for the sake of words as he has done. But here he is coming rather out of his kindness.
[*Exit* **Woman.**

Enter **Sir Politick.**

Sir P. Sir, I should beg your gracious pardon. There occurred today some unhappy mishap between myself and my wife ; and I was writing my apology, while you arrived, in order to pacify her.

Per. I am sorry, I am bringing you the news of a greater mishap. The gentleman you met at the port today who told you that he had landed in Venice recently—

Sir P. Yes ; but was he an absconding pander (procurer of women) ?

Per. No, sir : he was a spy set on you ; and he has reported to the government that you told him of your conspiracy to betray the State of Venice to the Turks.

Sir P. Alas me !

Per. For which reason warrants are being prepared for your arrest and also for the search of your reading-room for the papers—

Sir P. Alas, sir ; I have no such papers except notes prepared out of the dramas—

Per. So much the better for you, sir.

Sir P. And also a few essays. What do you advise me to do now ?

Per. The best for you would be to put yourself into a sugarchest, or in a rush-basket if you could roll up yourself ; I could then send you to a ship (*i. e.* place you on board a ship).

Sir P. Sir, I talked about the Turks, only by the way. and not seriously at all. [*Knocking within.*

Per. Listen, they have arrived.

Sir P. I am most miserable now.

Per. What are you going to do now, sir ? Have you not got any raisin-barrel into which you can jump ? They will torture you by putting you in a rack. You must be quick in action.

Sir P. Sir, I have an ingine—
3 *Mer.* [*within*]. Sir Politick Would-be !
2 *Mer.* [*within*]. Where is he ?
Sir P. That I have thought upon before time.
Per. What is it ?
Sir P. I shall ne'er endure the torture.
Marry, it is, sir, of a tortoise-shell.
Fitted for these extremities : pray you, sir help me.
Here I've a place, sir, to put back my legs,
Please you to lay it on, sir, [*lies down while Peregrine places the shell upon him*] – with this cap,
And my black gloves. I'll lie, sir, like a tortoise,
Till they are gone.
Per. And call you this an ingine ?
Sir P. Mine own device—Good sir, bid my wife's women
To burn my papers. [*Exit* **Peregrine.**

The three **Merchants** *rush in.*

1 *Mer.* Where is he hid ?
3 *Mer.* We must,
And will sure find him.
2 *Mer.* Which is his study ?

Re-enter **Peregrine.**

1 *Mer.* What
Are you, sir ?
Per. I am a merchant, that came here
To look upon this tortoise.
3 *Mer.* How !
1 *Mer.* St. Mark !
What beast is this ?
Per. It is a fish.
2 *Mer.* Come out here !
Per. Nay, you may strike him, sir, and tread upon him
He'll bear a cart.
1 *Mer.* What, to run over him ?
Per. Yes ; sir
3 *Mer.* Let's jump upon him ?
2 *Mer.* Can he not go ?
Per. He creeps, sir.

Sir P. Sir, I have got an implement—

3 *Mer.* [*within*]. Sir Politick Would-be !

2 *Mer.* [*within*]. Where is Sir Politick ?

Sir P. I thought of the implement before hand too.

Per. What sort of an implement ?

Sir P. I shall never feel the torture ; it is a tortoise-shell made particularly for such moments of crisis. Please, sir, help me in putting on the shell. I have some room in this shell to roll back my legs. Please put the shell on me (lies down while Peregrine places the shell upon him), covering my head with this cap and my hands with these black gloves. I will lie, sir, like a tortoise till they have left this place.

Per. Do you call this an implement ?

Sir P. It is my own invention or contrivance ; good sir, please ask my wife's attendants to burn my papers.

[*Exit* **Peregrine.**

The three Merchants *rush in.*

1 *Mer.* Where is he concealed ?

3 *Mer.* We must and we are sure to find him out.

2 *Mer.* Which is his reading-room ?

Re-enter **Peregrine.**

1 *Mer.* What is your occupation, sir ?

Per. I am a merchant, and I came here to have a look at this tortoise.

3 *Mer.* What is that ?

1 *Mer,* By St. Mark, what kind of a beast is this ?

Per. It is a fish.

2 *Mer.* How could it come out here ?

Per. No, you may hit him hard, sir, and also stand upon his back ; it will bear the load of a cart.

1 *Mer.* Do you really suggest that we should tread upon him ?

Per. Yes, sir.

3 *Mer.* Let us jump over his back.

2 *Mer.* Can he move ?

Per. He can move slowly, sir.

1 *Mer*. Let's see him creep.
Per. No, good sir, you will hurt him.
2 *Mer*. Heart, I will see him creep, or prick his guts.
3 *Mer*. Come out here !
Per. Pray you, sir !—Creep a little. [*Aside to Sir politick*.]
1 *Mer*. Forth.
2 *Mer*. Yet farther.
Per. Good sir !—Creep.
2 *Mer*. We'll see his legs.
[*They pull off the shell and discover him*.]
3 *Mer*. Ods so, he has garters !
1 *Mer*. Ay, and gloves !
2 *Mer*. Is this.
Your fearful tortoise ?
Per. [*discovering himself*.] Now, Sir Pol, we are even ;
For your next project I shall be prepared ;
I am sorry for the funeral of your notes, sir.
1 *Mer*. 'Twere a rare motion to be seen in Fleet-street.
2 *Mer*. Ay, in the Term
1 *Mer*. Or Smithfield, in the fair.
3 *Mer*. Methinks 'tis but a melancholy sight.
Per. Farewell, most politic tortoise !
[*Exeunt Per. and Merchants.*

Re-enter **Waiting-woman.**

Sir P. Where's my lady ?
Knows she of this ?
Wom. I know not, sir.
Sir P. Enquire.—
O, I shall be the fable of all feasts,
The freight of the gazetti, ship-boy's tale ;
And, which is worst, even talk for ordinaries.
Wom. My lady's come most melancholy home,
And says, sir, she will straight to sea, for physic,

1 Mer. Let us then see how he moves.

Per. No, good sir, you will injure him if you make him move.

2 Mer. By God, I must see him move slowly or I will poke his intestines.

3 Mer. Move a little.

Per. Please, sir——move a little [*Aside to Sir* Politick].

1 Mer. Come out.

2 Mer. A little further.

Per. Good sir—move a little,

2 Mer. We want to see his legs.

[*They pull off the shell and discover him.*]

3 Mer. By Jove, he is putting on garters (some elastic straps for keeping the socks in their position)

1 Mer. Yes, and gloves also ;

3 Mer. Is this the tortoise of which you are afraid ?

Per. (*Laying bare Sir Politick*) Now, Sir Politick, we are reconciled (*i.e.* I have taken my revenge). I am ready to listen to your next project. I am sorry that all your papers have been burnt to ashes.

1 Mer. It would have been a nice treat as a puppet play in the Fleet Street.

2 Mer. Yes, when the court is in session.

1 Mer. Or in the cattle market of Bartholomew Fair.

3 Mer. In my opinion, it is a miserable creature to look at.

Per. Good bye, most diplomatic (or wise) tortoise !

[*Exeunt* **Peregrine** *and* Merchants.

Re-enter **Waiting-woman**

Sir P. Where is my wife ? Does she know of this incident (of my personal humiliation) ?

Wom. I do not know ; sir.

Sir P. Just make inquiries. What a disgraceful thing when I shall be the talk of the people while dining together, the topic of the newspapers, and even the subject of talk in the taverns which is the worst possible form of scandal or disgrace.

Wom. My mistress has returned home with a very sad face, and she says that she would like to go out immediately on a sea voyage for a change of air.

Sir P. And I to shun this place and clime for ever,
Creeping with house on back, and think it well
To shrink my poor head in my politic shell. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V—*A Room in* **Volpone's** *House.*

Enter **Mosca** *in the habit of a Clarissimo, and* **Volpone** *in that of a Commandadore.*

Volp. Am I then like him?
Mos. O, sir, you are he;
No man can sever you.
Volp. Good.
Mos. But what am I?
Volp. 'Fore heaven, a brave clarissimo; thou becom'st it?
Pity thou wert not born one.
Mos. If I hold
My made one, 'twill be well. [*Aside.*
Volp. I'll go and see
What news first at the court. [*Exit.*
Mos. Do so. My Fox
Is out of his hole, and ere he shall re-enter,
I'll make him languish in his borrow'd case,
Except he come to composition with me.—
Androgyno, Castrone, Nano!

Enter **Androgyno, Castrone,** *and* **Nano.**

All. Here.
Mos. Go, recreate yourselves abroad; go sport. [*Exeunt.*
So, now I have the keys, and am possest.
Since he will needs be dead afore his time,
I'll bury him, or gain by him: I am his heir,
And so will keep me, till he share at least.
To cozen him of all, were but a cheat
Well placed; no man would construe it a sin:
Let his sport pay for't. This is call'd the Fox-trap.
[*Exit.*

Sir P. And I also have decided to quit this place for ever by hiding myself in this tortoise shell and thereby squeezing myself into it under the necessity of the circumstances. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V—*A Room in* Volpone's *House*.

Enter Mosca *in the garb of* Clarissimo, *and* Volpone *in that of a Commandadore.*

Volp. Do I resemble him (the sergeant) ?

Mos. Surely, sir you look exactly like him ; nobody can distinguish you from him.

Volp. That's good.

Mos. But what do I look like ?

Volp You look definitely like a magnificent nobleman ; but unfortunately, you were not born as a nobleman.

Mos. It will be good if I stick on to the position in which I have been placed by the will of Volpone. [*Aside.*

Volp. I will go and first out, first of all, the judgment of the court. [Exit.

Mos. Do so. My fox (Volpone) has now gone out and before he returns home I will make him lose his original position by his new garb of a sergeant unless he agrees to make a compromise with me (by sharing his wealth and property with me —Androgyno, Castrone, Nano!

Enter Androgyno, Castrone *and* Nano.

All. We are here, sir.

Mos. Go out and enjoy yourselves. [*Exeunt.*

So, now I possess the keys. As he wants to declare himself as dead before he is actually dead, I want to make him dead and derive benefit out of his death. I am his successor now, and I will maintain my self as his successor, till he compelled to share his wealth and property with me. To rob him of all his property would be cheating him; but then, nobody would regard it as cheating because he should pay some penalty for his own wickedness or folly (of declaring himself as dead before his actual death). This is actually the fox-trap in which he is now fallen. [*Exit.*

Scene VI—*A Street.*

Enter **Corbaccio** *and* **Corvino.**

Corb. They say, the court is set.
Corv. We must maintain
Our first tale good, for both our reputations.
Corb. Why, mine's no tale ; my son would there have kill'd me.
Corv. That's true, I had forgot :—mine is, I'm sure. [*Aside.*
But for your Will, sir.
Corb. Ay, I'll come upon him
For that hereafter, now his patron's dead

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. Signior Corvino ! and Corbaccio ! sir,
Much joy unto you.
Corb. Of what ?
Volp. The sudden good
Dropt down upon you—
Crob. Where ?
Volp. And none knows how,
From old Volpone, sir.
Corb. Out, arrant knave !
Volp. Let not your too much wealth, sir, make you furious.
Corb. Away, thou varlet !
Volp. Why, sir ?
Corb. Dost thou mock me ?
Volp. You mock the world, sir ; did you not change Wills ?
Corb. Out, harlot !
Volp. O ! belike you are the man.
Signior Corvino ? 'faith, you carry it well ;
You grow not mad withal ; I love your spirit :
You are not over-leaven'd with your fortune.
You should have some would swell now, like a wien-fat.
With such an autumn——Did he give you all, sir ?
Corb. Avoid, you rascal !

Scene VI—*A Street.*

Enter **Corbaccio** *and* **Corvino.**

Corb. They say that the court is having its session.

Corv. We must stick to our former, statements in order to maintain our position.

Corb. Why, I have made no false statement, because my son would have actually killed me.

Corv. You are right, I forgot it,—my statment, I am sure, is also correct. But then, there is the will (in which Mosca has been mentioned as the successor). [*Aside.*

Corb. Yes, I shall deal with him afterwards with regard to the will, now that his master is dead.

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. Mr. Corvino and Corbaccio ! Congratulations to both of you !

Corv. What for ?

Volp. For the sudden fortune that has come to your hand.

Corb. How ?

Volp. Nobody knows how but it has come from Volpone.

Corb. Get out, you wicked rascal.

Volp. Let not the vanity of your wealth make you forget yourself.

Corb. Get away, you slave.

Volp. Why should I get away ?

Corb. Do you taunt me ?

Volp. You rather taunt the world, sir, did you not change the Will ?

Corb. Get away, you prostitute ?

Volp. O, possibly you are the man who have inherited Volpone's wealth, Mr. Corvino. Surely, you do not appear to be puffed up with the possession of wealth ; you have not gone mad with it ; I appreciate your attitude ; you do not seem to be much changed due to the change of your fortune ; but now you have reasons to get puffed up just like a wine sack when filled with wine. Did you inherit all the property ?

Corv. Get away, you rascal.

Volp. Truth, your wife has shewn
Herself a very woman ; but you are well,
You need not care, you have a good estate
To bear it out, sir, better by this chance :
Except Corbaccio have a share.
Corb. Hence, varlet.
Volp. You will not be acknown, sir ; why 'tis wise,
Thus do all gamesters, at all games, dissemble :
No man will seem to win. [*Exeunt Corvino and Corbaccio*
Here comes my vulture:
Heaving his beak up in the air, and snuffing.

Scene VII—Volpone.

Enter **Voltore.**

Volt. Outstript thus, by a parasite ! a slave,
Would run on errands, and make legs for crumbs !
Well, what I'll do—
Volp. The court stays for your worship,
I e'en rejoice, sir, at your worship's happiness,
And that it fell into so learned hands,
That understand the fingering—
Volt. What do you mean ?
Volp. I mean to be a suitor to your worship,
For the small tenement, out of reparations,
That, to the end of your long row of houses,
By the Piscaria, it was, in Volpone's time,
Your predecessor, ere he grew diseased,
A handsome, pretty, custom'd bawdy-house
As any was in Venice, none dispraised ;
But fell with him : his body and that house
Decay'd together.
Volt. Come, sir, leave your prating.
Volp. Why, if your worship give me but your hand,
That I may have the refusal, I have done.
'Tis a mere toy to you, sir ; candle-rents ;
As your learn'd worship knows—
Volt. What do I know ?
Volp. Marry, no end of your wealth, sir ; God decrease it !
Volt. Mistaking knave ! what, mock'st thou my misfortune ? [*Exit*.

Volp. You are not going to admit that you are the owner of Volpone's property; it is a wise policy. All persons who gamble always pretend that they are not goingto be winners (*Exeunt Corvino and Corbaccio*)—Here my vulture (Voltore) is coming, putting up his nose in the air as if to smell the dead body.

Scene VII—Volpone.

Enter **Voltore.**

Volt. I have been outwitted in this manner by a parasite. a mean slave, who used to do the job of carrying messages and how before people, in order to earn his bread. Well I will make him feel what steps I am going to take against him—

Volp. The court is waiting for your honour. I congratulate you, sir, upon your fortune that it fell into the hands of a learned man like you, who have such a great greed for money—

Volt. What do you actually mean ?

Volp. I want to be a candidate for your favour regarding the small house, which is now beyond repair and which is lying at the farthest end of the row of houses in the fish-market. In the time of Volpone, who was your predecessor, the house was a beautiful place of luxury and pleasure like any other house in Venice ; but it came to decay without anybody's fault as Volpone's body began to decay, so both the house and Volpone, as it were, decayed together.

Volt. Come to the point, sir, instead of talking in a roundabout manner.

Volp. If your honour shake hands with me as a token of your promise to give me the house, I shall not talk more. It is a petty thing to you and it fetches no rent being a wastehouse, as your learned self knows it quite well.

Volt. What do I know ?

Volp. To be sure, you have now vast wealth, may God reduce it ?

Volt. You mistaken rascal, do you want to mock at my misfortune ? [*Exit.*

Volp. His blessing on your heart, sir; would 'twere more!
Now to my first again, at the next corner. [*Exit.*

Scene VIII—*Another part of the Street.*

Enter Corbaccio *and* Corvino;—Mosca *passes over the stage, before them.*

Corb. See, in our habit! see the impudent varlet!

Corv. That I could shoot mine eyes at him like gun-stones!

Enter Volpone.

Volp. But is this true, sir, of the parasite?

Corb. Again, to afflict us! monster!

Volp. In good faith, sir,
I'm heartily grieved, a beard of your grave length
Should be so overreach'd I never brook'd
That parasite's hair; methought his nose should cozen;
There still was somewhat in his look, did promise
The bane of a clarissimo.

Corb. Knave—

Volp. Methinks
Yet you, that are so traded in the world,
A witty merchant, the fine bird, Corvino,
That have such moral emblems on your name,
Should not have sung your shame and dropt your cheese,
To let the Fox laugh at your emptiness.

Corv. Sirrah, you think the privilege of the place,
And your red saucy cap, that seems to me.
Nail'd to your jolt-head with those two chequines,
Can warrant your abuses; come you hither:
You shall perceive, sir, I dare beat you; approach.

Volp. No haste, sir, I do know your valour well,
Since you durst publish what you are, sir.

Corv. Tarry,
I'd speak with you.

Volp. Sir, sir, another time—

Corv. Nay, now.

Volp. May God bless you, sir, so that greater misfortune may fail upon you ! Now, let me tease again Corbaccio, and Corvino who are standing at the other cornor. [*Exit.*

Scene VIII—*Another part of the street.*

Enter **Corbaccio** *and* **Corvino, Mosca** *passes over the stage, before them*

Corb. Look at the impertinent slave (Mosca) who is going dressed as a gentleman like ourselves.

Corv. I wish, I could shoot glances at him like gunshots.

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. Is it a fact that the parasite has inherited the property of Volpone.

Corb. The devil has come again to torture us.

Volp. Honestly speaking, I am really sorry that a person with such long beard should have been outwitted by him. I never tolerated that parasite even by a hair (not in the least). I suspected, considering the shape of his nose, that he would cheat you ; there was something about his appearance which indicated that he would bring about the ruin of a gentleman.

Corb. Rascal.

Volp. In my opinion, you (Corvino) who are known as an intelligent merchant and who have so much of moral reputation, should not have disgraced yourself so much (by calling your wife a prostitute in an open court), and foolishly given the Fox (Mosca) any chance of inheriting the property of Volpone by allowing yourself to be fooled by him and to be mocked by him at your misfortune.

Corv. You impertinent fellow, do you think that by merely wearing a red cap and two gilt buttons on your head, you have the right to abuse us gentlemen with perfect safety. You just draw nearer, and you will see that I can beat you.

Volp. Don't be so hasty, sir. I know your courage because you can openly declare yourself as a cuckold.

Corv. Just wait a little ; I shall deal with you in the proper manner.

Volp. No, sir, another time—

Corv. No, now.

Volp. O lord, sir, ! were a wise man,
Would stand the fury of a distracted cuckold.
[*As he is running off, re-anter* **Mosca.**

Corb. What, come again !
Volp. Upon 'em, Mosca ; save me.
Corb. The air's infected where he breathes.
Corv. Let's fly him. [*Exeunt Corv. and Corb.*
Volp. Excellent basilisk ! turn upon the vulture.

Scene IX—*Enter* **Voltore.**

Volt. Well, flesh-fly, it is summer with you now ;
Your winter will come on.
Mos. Good advocate,
Prithee not rail, nor threaten out of place thus ;
Thou'lt make a solecism, as a madam says.
Get you a biggin more, your brain breaks loose.
Volt. Well, sir. [*Exit.*
Volp. Would you have me beat the insolent slave.
Throw dirt upon his first good clothes ?
Volt. This same
Is doubtless some familiar.
Volp. Sir, the court,
In truth, stays for you. I am mad, a mule
That never read Justinian, should get up,
And ride an advocate. Had you no quirk
To avoid gullage, sir, by such a creature ?
I hope yon do but jest ; he has not done it,
'Tis but confederacy, to blind the rest.
You are the heir.
Volt. A strange, officious,
Troublesome knave ! thou dost torment me.
Volp. I know—
It cannot be, sir, that you should be cozcn'd ;
'Tis not within the wit of man to do it ;
You are so wise, so prudent ; and 'tis fit
That wealth and wisdom still should go together.
[*Exeunt*

Volp. Good God! I would not be a wise person to wait for the rage of mad cuckold.

[*As he is running off, re-enter* **Mosca.**

Corb. What, again arrived!

Volp. Fall upon them (Corbaccio and Corvino) and save me from their hands.

Corb. The air becomes filthy wherever he is present.

Corv. Let us get away from him. [*Exeunt Corv. and Corb.*

Volp. Wonderful snake (that can kill by the mere look or breath)! Now pounce upon Voltore.

Scene IX—*Enter* **Voltore.**

Volt. Well, most rotten fly that feeds on dead bodies and filth? You are now having a prosperous time; but your misfortune will soon come.

Mos. Good lawyer, please do not abuse or threaten me unjustly. Lady Would be says that if you lose your temper, you will play the bigger fool.

Volt. Well, sir. [*Exit.*

Volp. Do you want me to beat this impertinent rouge and throw filth upon the dress of a gentleman which he is putting on?

Volt. This follow (Volpone in disguise) must be a follower of Mosca.

Volp. Sir, the court is waiting for you. Sir, I should be mad if I think that I can make a fool of a lawyer when I know nothing of law myself. Had you no cleverness In you to be saved from being fooled by such a creature? I am sure, you are joking; he has not done it (secured the inheritance); but it is by conspiracy that he has won it, in order to make a fool of others. You are the real successor, sir.

Volt. You are a medlesome offensive rascal; you are torturing me.

Volp. I know that you cannot be cheated by any one because you are so clever and intelligent; it is quite proper that wealth should go to a person, who is wise and intelligent. [*Exeunt.*

Scene X—*The Scrutineo or Senate-House.*

Enter **Avocatori, Notario, Bonario, Celia, Corbaccio, Corvino, Commandadori, Saffi,** *etc.*

1 *Avoc.* Are all the parties here ?
Not. All but the advocate.
2 *Avoc.* And here he comes.

Enter **Voltore** *and* **Volpone.**

1 *Avoc.* Then bring them forth to sentence.
Volt. O, my most honour'd fathers, let your mercy
Once with upon your justice, to forgive—
I am distracted—
Volp. What will he do now ? [*Aside.*
Volt. O'
I know not which to address myself to first ;
Whether you fatherhoods, or these innocents—
Corv. Will he betray himself ? [*Aside.*
Volt. Whom equally
I have abused, out of most covetous ends—
Corv. The man is mad !
Corb. What's that ?
Corv. He is possest.
Volt. For which, now struck in conscienee, here,
I prostrate
Myself at your offended feet, for pardon.
1' 2 *Avoc.* Arise.
Cel. O heaven, how just thou art !
Volp. I am caught
In Mine own noose—
Corv. [*to Corbaccio.*] Be constant, sir : nought now
Can help, but impudence.
1 *Avoc.* Speak forward.
Com. Silence !
Volt. It is not passion in me, reverend father,
But only conscience, conscience, my good sires,
That makes me now tell truth. That parasite,
That knave, hath been the instrument of all.
1 *Avoc.* Where is that knave ? fetch him.

Scene X—*The Scrutineo or Senate-House.*

Enter **Avocatori Notario, Bonario, Celia, Corbaccio, Corvino,** Commandadari Saffi *etc.*

1 *Avoc.* Are all the parties present ?

Not. All except the lawyer,

2 *Avoc.* Here the lawyer is coming.

Enter **Voltore** *and* **Volpone.**

1 *Avoc.* Bring the accused (Bonario and Celia) to receive their sentence or punishment.

Volt. O, my venerable fathers, let your mercy once at least conquer your justice to forgive the accused. I have gone mad—

Volp. What is he going to do now ? [*Aside.*

Volt. Alas, I do not know to whom I should first ask for forgiveness either to you, venerable fathers, or, to those who have been falsely accused.

Corv. Will be expose his own position ? [*Aside.*

Voit. Should I first appeal to those first whom I have injured much out of my greed for money ?

Corv. The man has gone off his head.

Corb. What does he say ?

Corv. He has been possessed by some evil spirit (the devil).

Voit. I am feeling the pinches of my conscience, and that is why, I am throwing myself at your feet for your forgiveness.

1, 2 *Avoc.* Get up.

Cel. O God, how fair you are !

Volp. I have been caught in my own trap. [*Aside.*

Corv. (*to Corbaccio*) Stick to your position (i. e. original statements), because nothing but shamelessness can save us.

1 *Avoc.* Speak on (or speak frankly).

Com. Keep quiet !

Volt. Venerable fathers, my good gentlemen, it is not out of anger but out of my moral sense that I am going to speak the truth now. The parasite, the scoundrel, is the cause of all this.

1 *Avoc.* Where is that scoundrel ? Bring him here. [*Exit.*

Volp. I go. [*Exit.*
Corv. Grave fathers,
This man's distracted ; he confest it now :
For, hopping to be old Volpone's heir,
Who now is dead—
3 *Avoc.* How !
2 *Avoc.* Is Volpone dead ?
Corv. Dead since grave fathers.
Bon. O sure vengeance !
1 *Avoc.* Stay,
Then he was no deceiver.
Volt. O no, none :
The parasite, grave fathers.
Corv. He does speak.
Out of mere envy,' cause the servant's made
The thing he gaped for : please your fatherhoods,
This is the truth, though I'll not justify
The other, but he may be some-deal faulty.
Volt. Ay, to your hopes, as well as mine, Corvino :
But I'll use modesty. Pleaseth your wisdoms,
To view these certain notes, and but confer them ;
As I hope favour, they shall speak clear truth.
Corv. The devil has enter'd him !
Bon. Or bides in you,
4 *Avoc.* We have done ill, by a public officer
To send for him, if he be heir.
2 *Avoc.* For whom ?
4 *Avoc.* Him that they call the parasite.
3 *Avoc.* 'Tis true,
He is a man of great estate, now.
4 *Avoc.* Go you, and learn his name, and say, the court
Entreats his presence here, but to the clearing
Of some few doubts. [*Exit* Notary.
2 *Avoc.* This same's a labyrinth !
1 *Avoc.* Stand you unto your first report ?
Corv. My state,
My life, my fame—
Bon. Where is it ?
Corv. Are at the stake.
1 *Avoc.* Is yours so too ?

Volp. I am going to bring him.

Corv. Venerable fathers, this man has gone off his head; he confessed it just now; he expected to be the successor to Volpone who is now dead.

3 *Avoc.* How?

2 *Avoc.* Is Volpone really dead?

Corv. He died long ago, venerable fathers.

Bon How inevitable is justice.

1 *Avoc.* Wait; then he was not a pretender.

Volt. O, no, not at all, the parasite, venerable fathers, is the real pretender.

Corv. He is speaking like this out of jealousy, because the servant has been made the successor, what he wanted to be. This is the real truth, venerable fathers, although I will not defend the other person (Mosca) because he may be slightly at fault.

Volt. Yes, he is at fault, so far your hope and mine are concerned. But I will not be indecent (by exposing you). Please satisfy yourselves by examining these notes which will give you an exact idea of the real position.

Corv. The devil has taken hold of him.

Bon. The devil already dwells in you.

4 *Avoc.* We have done a great wrong by sending a public officer to bring him to the court if he is really the successor to such vast wealth and property.

2 *Avoc.* For whom?

4 *Avoc,* Him whom they call the parasite,

3 *Avoc,* It is true, that he is now the owner of great wealth and property.

4 *Avoc.* Go and enquire about his name; and tell him that the court requests him to be here in order to explain certain doubtful points. [*Exit* Notary.

2 *Avoc.* The whole thing is a mere haze (something which is not inteiigible).

1 *Avoc.* Do you stick to your former statement?

Corv. My property, my life, my honour everything is——.

Bon. Where is it now?

Corv. Are at stake (in great risks).

1 *Avoc.* Is your everything also at stake?

Corb. The advocate's a knave,
And has a forked tongue—
2 *Avoc.* Speak to the point.
Corb. So is the parasite too.
1 *Avoc.* This is confusion.
Volt. I do beseech your fatherhoods, read but those—
[*Giving them papers.*
Corv. And credit nothing the false spirit hath writ:
It cannot be, but he's possest, gave fathers.
[*The scene closes.*

Scene XI—*A Street.*

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. To make a snare for mine own neck ! and run.
My head into it, wilfully ! with laughter !
When I had newly 'scaped, was free, and clear,
Out of mere wantonness ! O, the dull devil
Was in this brain of mine, when I devised it,
And Mosca gave it second ; he must now
Help to sear up this vein, or we bleed dead—

Enter **Nane, Androgyno,** *and* **Castrone.**

How now ! who let you loose ? whither go you now ?
What, to buy gingerbread, or to drown kitlings ?
Nan. Sir, master mosca call'd us out of doors,
And bid us all go play, and took the keys.
And. Yes.
Volp. Did master Mosca take the keys ? why so !
I'm further in. These are my fine conceits !
I must be merry, with a mischief to me !
What a vile wretch was I, that could not bear
My fortune soberly ? I must have my crotchets,
And my conundrums ! Well, go, and seek him :
His meaning may be truer than my fear.
Bid him, he straight come to me to the court :
Thither will I, and, if't, be possible,
Unscrew and advocate, upon new hopes :
When I provoked him, then I lost myself. [*Exeunt.*

Corb. The lawyer is a rogue, he has a double tongue (*i. e.* he can speak two opposite things at the same time).

2 *Avoc.* Don't be irrelevant (don't speak beside the mark).

Corb. The parasite also has a double tongue.

1 *Avoc.* The whole thing is a confusion (*i. e.* we cannot understand any thing).

Volt. I would entreat you, venerable fathers, to read these papers. [*Giving them papers.*

Corv. But please do not trust any of the words because a false (evil) spirit has written them, because he is now possessed by an evil spirit. [*The scene closes.*

Scene XI—*A Street.*

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. What an act of folly I committed by preparing a net for myself and then getting into the same net myself, of my own accord and joyfully too, particularly, when recently I escaped from one risky position. The foolish evil brain of mine invented this trap and Mosca approved of it ; he must now open my vein in order to save me from this position or both of us will be ruined.

Enter **Nano, Androgyno,** *and* **Castrone**

What's the matter ? who let you off like this ? Where are you going now ? Is it to buy some gingerbread or to kill some kittens by drowning them into the river ?

Nan. Sir, master Mosca called us and asked us to go out and enjoy ourselves, and he took possession of the keys.

And. Yes, sir.

Volp. Did master Mosca take the keys with him ? Why did he do so ? I am now in further troubles. These are the results of my strange fancies or whims. I must now look cheerful with the prospect of an injury to me. What a mean rascal I was that I could not enjoy my wealth without being wild ; well, you go and find him out. He may be plotting greater injuries than I am fearing him to do. Ask him to meet me immediately in the court where I will be going ; and if possible, soften him by holding out fresh hopes about the inheritance of my property. When I annoyed him I ruined my own interest.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene XII—*The Scrutineo, or Senate-House.*

Avocatori, Bonario, Celia, Corbaccio, Corvino, Commandadori, Saffi, *etc., as before.*

1 *Avoc.* These things can ne'er be reconciled. He, here,
[*Showing the papers.*
Professeth, that the gentleman was wrong'd,
And that the gentleman was brought thither,
Forced by her husband, and there left.
Volt. Most true.
Cel. How ready is heaven to those that pray!
1 *Avoc.* But that
Volpone would have revish'd her, he holds
Utterly false, knowing his impotence.
Corv. Grave fathers, he's possest; again, I say,
Possest: nay, if there be possession, and
Obsession, he has both.
3 *Avoc.* Here comes our officer.

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. The parasite will straight be here, grave fathers.
4 *Avov.* You might invent some other name, sir, varlet.
3 *Avoc.* Did not the notary meet him?
Volp. Not that I know.
4 *Avoc.* His coming will clear all.
2 *Avoc.* Yet, it is misty.
Volt. May't please your fatherhoods—
Volp. [*whispers to Volt.*] Sir, the parasite
Will'd me to tell you, that his master lives;
That, you are still the man; your hopes the same,
And this was only a jest—
Volt. How?
Volp. Sir, to try
If you were firm, and how you stood affected,
Volt. Art sure he lives?
Volp. Do I live, sir?
Volt. O me!
I was too violent.

Scene XII—*Scrutineo, or Senate-House.*

Avocatori, Bonario, Celia, Corbaccio, Corvino, Commandadori, Saffi *etc., as before.*

1 *Avoc.* These statements are contradictory to one another. He says here (*showing the papers*) that the gentleman (Bonario) was unjustly treated, and that the woman (Celia) was brought and left there under compulsion from her husband.

Volt. Perfectly true.

Cel. How kind is God to those who pray to Him !

1 *Avoc.* That Volpone outraged the woman is regarded by him as perfectly false because Volpone is impotent.

Corv. Venerable fathers, he is pos,essed by some evil spirit; I would like to tell your over and over again that he is possessed by the devil and also occupied (or haunted) by one thought (that Volpone and not Bonario outraged the woman).

3 *Avoc.* Here arrives the Sergeant (Volpone).

Enter **Volpone.**

Volp. The parasite will be immediately here, venerable fathers.

4 *Avoc.* You should use some other name, and not 'parasite', Mr, Sergeant.

3 *Avoc.* Did not the Notary meet him (Mosca) ?

Volp. I am not aware of it.

4 *Avoc.* His arrival will explain the whole mystery.

2 *Avoc.* Yet the whole thing appears to be a mystery.

Volt. May you, venerable fathers, be pleased—

Volp. (*whispers*) Sir, the parasite authorised me to tell you that his master (Volpone) is not dead and that you are even now the real successor, and also that your chances of being the successor are as bright as before and that everything so far was done to make a fun.

Volt. How (why) ?

Volp. Sir, just to examine tf you are strong enough to bear the fun or how you are impressed by it.

Volt. Are you sure that he is not dead ?

Volp. Am I not alive, sir ?

Volt. Alas, I was too hasty.

Volp. Sir, you may redeem it.
They said, you were possest ; down, and seem so :
I'll help to make it good. [*Voltore falls.*]—God bless the man !—
Stop your wind hard, and swell—See, see, see, see !
He vomits crooked pins ! his eyes are set,
Like a dead hare's hung in a poulter's shop !
His mouth's running away ! Do you see, signior ?
Now it is in his belly.

Corv. Ay, the devil !
Volp. Now in his throat.
Corv. Ay, I perceive it plain.
Volp. 'Twill out, 'twill out! stand clear, See where it flies.
In shape of a blue toad. with a bat's wings !
Do you not see it, sir ?
Corv. What ? I think I do.
Corv. 'Tis to manifest.
Volp. Look ! he comes to himself !
Volt. Where am I ?
Volp. Take good heart, the worst is past, sir.
You are dispossest.
1 *Avoc.* What accident is this !
2 *Avoc.* Sudden, and full of wonder !
Avoc. If he were
Possest, as it appears, all this is nothing.
Corv. He has been often subject to these fits.
1 *Avoc.* Shew him that writing :—do you know it, sir ?
Volp. [*whispers to Volt.*] Deny it, sir, forswear it : know it not.
Volt. Yes, I do know it well, it is my hand ;
But all that it contains is false.
Bon. O practice !
2 *Avoc.* What maze is this !
1 *Avoc.* Is he not guilty then,
Whom you there name the parasite ?
Volt. Grave fathers.
No more than his good patron, old Volpone.
4 *Avoc.* Why, he is dead.
Volt. O no, my honour'd fathers,
He lives—

Volp. Sir, you may correct your position (contradictory position). They have said that you are possessed by some evil spirit: therefore, fall down and pretend to be possessed; I will help you to appear as possessed (**Voltore** *falls*) —May God save man? Stop breathing and swell your body – look, look, look? He is vomitting crooked pins. His eye have gone into their sockets just like the eyes of rabbit hung up in the shop of a fowl-dealer. His mouth is getting distorted (or twisted). Do you see, Mr.? Now the devil is in his belly.

Corb. Yes, the devil!

Volp. Now the devil is in his throat.

Corv. Yes, I see it distinctly.

Volp. The devil will be out. Stand apart. See where it flies in the shape of a blue toad with the wings of a bat! Do you notice it, sir?

Corb. What? I think, I see it.

Corv. It is too clearly visible.

Volp. Look! he is coming back to his senses!

Volt. Where am I now?

Volp. Have courage; the worst is over, sir, you are free from the devil.

1 *Avoc.* What kind of an accident is this?

2 *Avoc.* The accident is sudden and very strange indeed.

4 *Avoc.* If he were really possessed by the devil, all his papers would be meaningless.

Corv. He suffers from such fits occasionally.

1 *Avoc.* Show him those papers; do you recognise them, sir?

Volp. *Whispers to* **Voltore**). Do not recognise them; refuse to acknowledge them; do not acknowledge them at all.

Volt. I know these papers quite well; they are my handwritings; but all that they contain is false.

Bon. What a foul conspiracy!

3 *Avoc.* What a mystery is this!

1 *Avoc.* Is not the person guilty whom you mention in the papers as the parasite?

Volt. Venerable fathers, he is no more guilty than his master Volpone.

4 *Avoc.* Why, he is dead.

Volt. O, no, my honourable fathers, he is not dead.

1 *Avoc.* How ! lives ?
Volt. Lives.
2 *Avoc.* This is subtler yet !
3 *Avoc.* You said he was dead.
Volt. Never.
3 *Avoc.* You said so.
Corv. I heard so.
4 *Avoc.* Here comes the gentleman ; make him way.

Enter Mosca.

3 *Avoc.* A stool.
4 *Avoc.* A proper man ; and, were Volpone dead,
A fit match for my daughter. [*Aside.*
3 *Avoc.* Give him way.
Volp. Mosca, I was almost lost ; the advocate
Had betrayed all ; but now it recovered ;
All's on the hinge again—Say, I am living.
[*Aside to* Mos.
Mos. What busy knave is this !—most reverend father,
I sooner had attended your grave pleasures,
But that my order for the funeral
Of my dear patron, did require me—
Volp. Mosca ! [*Aside.*
Mos. Whom I intend to bury like a gentleman.
Volp, Any, quick, and cozen me of all.
[*Aside.*
2 *Avoc.* Still stranger !
More intricate !
1 *Avoc.* And come about again !
4 *Avoc.* It is a match, my daughter is bestow'd [*Aside.*
Mos. Will you give me half ? [*Aside to* Volp.
Volp. First, I'll be hang'd.
Mos. I know
Your voice is good, cry not so loud.
1 *Avoc.* Demand
The advocate—Sir, did you not affirm
Volpone was alive ?

1 *Avoc.* How is he alive ?
Volt. He is alive.
2 *Avoc.* This is stranger still.
3 *Avoc.* You said that he was dead.
Volt. Never.
3 *Avoc.* You said so.
Corv. I heard that he was dead.
4 *Avoc.* Here comes the gentleman (Mosca) ; make room for him.

Enter **Mosca.**

3 *Avoc.* A chair.

4 *Avoc.* A handsome person ; and if Volpone is really dead this man would be a proper husband for my daughter. [*Aside.*

4 *Avoc.* Give him room (passage).

Volp. Mosca, I was almost ruined ; the lawyer has exposed all ; but now it has been amended (made good). Everything is now again trembling in balance. Say that I am not dead. [*Aside to* **Mosca.**

Mos. What a scoundrel is this ?—Most reverend fathers, I would have come her earlier immediately on receiving your message, but then, I was detained by the funeral ceremony of my patron—

Volp. Mosca. [*Aside.*

Mos. I wanted to bury my patron in a respectable manner.

Volp. Yes, you buried me too quickly and robbed me of all my fortune. [*Aside.*

2 *Avoc.* Still more mysterious ! Still more complicated !
1 *Avoc.* The same confusion again !

4 *Avoc.* He is a proper groom, and my daughter will be well-settled.

Mos. Do you agree to give me half of your wealth and property ? [*Aside to* **Volp.**

Volp. I should like to be hanged before giving half of my property to you.

Mos. I can follow your voice even in whispers ; you need not speak so loudly.

1 *Avoc.* We want to hear from the lawyer—Sir, did you not say that Volpone was alive ?

Volp Yes, and he is;
This gentleman told me so.—Thou shalt have half.—
Aside to **Mos.**

Mos. Whose drunkard is this same? speak, some that know him:
I never saw his face.—I cannot now
Afford it you so cheap. [*Aside to* **Volp.**

Volp. No!

1 *Avoc.* What say you?

Volt The officer told me.

Volp I did, grave fathers
And will maintain he lives, with mine own life,
And that this creature [*Points to* **Mosca**] told me.—
I was born
With all good stars my enemies. [*Aside.*

Mos Most grave fathers,
If such an insolence as this must pass
Upon me, I am silent; 'twas not this
For which you sent, I hope.

2 *Avoc* Take him away.

Volp. Mosca!

3 *Avoc.* Let him be whipt.

Volp. Wilt thou betray me?
Cozen me?

3 *Avoc.* And taught ta bear himself
Toward a person of his rank.

4 *Avoc.* Away. [*The officers seize* **Volpone.**

Mos. I humbly thank your fatherhoods.

Volp. Soft, soft: whipt!
And lose all that I have! If I confess.
It cannot be much more. [*Aside.*

4 *Avoc.* Sir. are you married?

Volp. They'll be allied anon; I must be resolute:
The Fox shall here uncase. [*Throws off his disgutse.*

Mos. Patron!

Volp. Nay, now
My ruins shall not come alone; your match
I'll hinder sure: my substance shall not glue you,
Nor screw you into a family.

Mos. Why, patron!

Volp. Yes, he did; and he is alive. This gentleman (Mosca told me so—You will take half of my property— [*Aside to* **Mos.**

Mos. Who is this drunken fellow? Anybody who knows him should speak; I never saw his face—I cannot agree to accept only half of your property— [*Aside to* **Volp.**

Volp. No agreed?

1 *Avoc.* What do you say?

Volt. The sergeant told me (that Volpone is alive).

Volp. Yes, I told him, venerable fathers, and I will defend my word on penalty of death; and that fellow (*pointing to* **Mosca**), told me—When I was born all my favourable stars went against me (*i.e.* I have been unfortunate since my very birth).

Mos. Most venerable fathers, if such an outrage can be made upon me, I would like to keep quiet; I am sure, you did not send for me to get me insulted like this.

2 *Avoc.* Remove him (Volpone) from the court.

Volp. Mosca?

3 *Avoc.* Let him be flogged.

Volp. Will you expose me and cheat me?

3 *Avoc.* He should be taught how to behave like a sergeant in a court of law.

4 *Avoc.* Take him away. *The officers seize* **Volpone.**

Mos. I thank you heartily venerable fathers.

Volp. Wait, wait: should I be whipped and also be robbed of my all? And if I confess the truth, I cannot lose more than that. [*Aside.*

4 *Avoc.* Sir, are you married?

Volp. They will be in league soon, I must be determined; the fox (myself) shall now reveal its true identity. [*Throws off his disguise.*

Mos. Patron?

Volp. No, now I shall not be ruined alone; your marriage I will certainly prevent; my wealth will not serve as a recommendation to be married in a respectable family.

Mos. Why, master?

Volp. I am Volpone, and this is my knave ;
[*Pointing to* Mosca.
This, [*to* Volt.] his own knave ; this, [*to Corb.*] avarice's fool ;
This, [*to Corb.*] a chimera of wittol, fool, and knave :
And, reverend fathers, since we all can hope
Nought but a sentence, let's not now despair it.
You here me brief.

Corv. May it please you fatherhoods—
Com. Silence.

1 *Avoc.* The knot is now undone by miracle,
2 *Avoc.* Nothing can be more clear.
3 *Avoc.* Or can more prove
These innocent.

1 *Avoc* Give them their liberty.

Bon. Heaven could not long let such gross crimes he hid.

2 *Avoc.* If this be held the high-way to get riches,
May I be poor.

3 *Avoc.* This is not the gain, but torment.

1 *Avoc.* These possess wealth, as sick men possess fevers
Which trulier may be said to possess them.

2 *Avoc.* Disrobe that parasite.

Corv. Mos. Most honour'd fathers !

1 *Avoc.* Can you plead aught to stay the course of justice?
If you can, speak.

Corv. Volt. We beg favour.

Cel. And mercy.

1 *Avoc* You hurt your innocence, sueing for the guilty
Stand forth ; first the parasite : You appear,
T'have been the cheifest minister, if not plotter,
In all these lewd impostures ; and now, lastly,
Have with your impudence abused the court,
And habit of a gentleman of Venice,
Being a fellow of no birth or blood :
For which our sentence is first, thou be whipt ;
Then live perpetual prisoner in our gallies.

Volp. I thank you for him.
Mos. Bane to thy wolvish nature !

Volp. I am Volpone, and this is [my scoundrel parasite (*Pointing to* **Mos.**) This (*to* **Volt.**) is a scoundrel by himself ; this (*to* **Corb**.) is the victim of his greed ; this (*to* **Corv.**) is a monstrous cuckold, fool and scoundrel; And, venerable fathers, as we cannot except anything but some punishment, let us not be hopeless : these are real facts in short I have told you.

Corv. Venerable fathers, may you listen to me ?

Com. Keep quiet.

1 *Avoc.* The mystery has now been solved by somc strange accident.

2 *Avoc.* Nothing can be more clear.

3 *Avoc.* Set them (Bonario and Celia) free.

Bon. God could not keep such foul crime unexposed.

2 *Avoc.* If this is thr easiest manner of growing rich, I should like to remain poor.

3 *Avoc.* This manner of earning wealth is not at all happy but most painful.

1 *Avoc.* Such people possess wealth in the same manner as sick persons suffer from fever, which more truly possesses them (tortures them),

2 *Avoc.* Take off the gown from the parasite.

Corv. Mos. Most honourable fathers ?—

1 *Avoc.* Can you argue again to stop the course of law *i. e.* penalties of law) ? If you can then argue.

Corv. Volt. We beg favour.

Cel, And mercy.

1 *Avoc.* You are injuring you innocence by begging mercy for thc guilty. Stand forth, first of all, the parasite. You seem to be the chief agent, if not the chief conspirator of all these foul games of treachery ; and now in the court you have insulted the dignity of the Venetian gentry by wearing their dress, inspite of being a person low born ; and for this, our award of punishment is that you will be whipt, and then, you will be condemned to life-long slavery in the boats.

Volp. I thank you for awarding such a punishment to him.

Mos. May your greedy nature be punis hed with poison.

1 *Avoc.* Deliver him to the saffi. [Mosca *is carried out*]—Thou, Volpone,
By blood and rank a gentleman, canst not fall
Under like censure ; but our judgement on thee
Is, that thy substance all be straight confiscate
To hospital of the Incurabili :
And, since the most was gotton by imposture,
By feigning lame, gout, palsy, and such diseases,
Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with irons,
Till thou be'st sick and lame indeed.—Remove him.
[*He is taken from the Bar.*

Volp. This is call'd mortifying of a fox.

1 *Avoc.* Thou, Voltore, to take away the scandal
Thou hast given all worthy men of thy profession,
Art banish'd from their fellowship, and our state.
Corbaccio !—bring him near—We here possess
Thy son of all thy state, and confine thee
To the monastery of San Spirito ;
Where, since thou knewest not how to live well here,
Thou shalt be learn'd to die well.

Corb. Ah ! what said he ?

Com. You shall know anon, sir.

1 *Avoc.* Thou, Corvino, shalt
Be straight embark'd from the thine own house, and row'd
Round about Venice, through the grang canale.
Wearing a cap, with fair long ass's ears,
Instead of horns ; and so to mount, a paper
Pinn'd on thy breast, to the Berlina—

Corv. Yes,
And have mine eyes beat out with stinking fish,
Bruised fruit, and rotten eggs—'Tis well, I, am glad
I shall not see my shame yet.

1 *Avoc.* Hand him over to the bailiffs. [**Mosca** *is carried out.*

You, Volpone, being a gentleman by birth and rank. cannot have the same punishment ; but our award of punishment to you is that all your property would be Seized by the government and transferred to the hospital of the incurable patients. And because most of your wealth was collected by foul means—by pretending to be crippled, rheumatic, paralytic and suffering from such other diseases, you are condemned to lie in the prison chained with irons till you grow actually sick and crippled. Take him away. [*He is taken from the Bar.*

Volp. This is what is known as the punishmen or humiliation of the fox (or Volpone).

1 *Avoc.* You, Voltore, in ordec to remove the infamy from the legal profession you have brought to it, you are condemned to be exiled from the honourable members of the legal profession and also from this state of Venice. Corbaccio ! bring him nearer—we hereby coufer all your property upon your son and you are condemned to live all your life in the monastery of San Spirito. where you will have to die because you have not learnt how to live a good life in Venice.

Corb, Ah ! What did he say ?

Com. You will come to know, soon sir.

1 *Avcc.* You, Corvino, you will soon be conveyed out of your house into a boat and you will be shown round the great canal of Venice by putting on your head a fool's cap and olso the ears of an ass in place of horns (because you are already known as a cuckold with horns on your head) ; and a paper will be pasted upon your chest and you shall be placed upon a raised stage holding you up to ridicule and shame.

Corv. Yes, it would be better to have my eyes blinded with stale and foul smelling fish and with smashed fruits and rotten eggs. I rhall then be glad not to see my shame which I have brought upon myself by declaring my wife a prostitute publicly.

1 *Avoc.* And to expiate
Thy wrongs done to thy wife, thou art to send her
Home to her father, with her dowry trebled :
And these are all your judgements.

All. Honour'd fathers—

1 *Avoc.* Which may not be revoked. Now you begin,
When crimes are done, and past, and to be punish'd,
To think what your crimes are ; away with them.
Let all that see these vices thus rewarded,
Take heart and love to study 'em ! Mischiefs feed
Like beasts till they be fat, and then they bleed.
[*Exeunt.*

Volpone *comes forward.*

The seasoning of a play, is the applause.
Now. though the Fox be punish'd by the laws,
He yet doth hope, there is no suffering due,
For any fact which he hath done 'gainst you ;
If there be, censure him ; here he doubtful stands :
If not, fare jovially, and clap your hands [*Exit.*

1 *Avoc.* And to atone for the injuries done to your wife, you are ordered to send her to her parents' house, paying to her triple the amount of the dowry which you had to pay while marrying her. These are the judgments we have declared upon everyone of you.

All. Reverend fathers—

1 *Avoc.* Our judgments shall not be recalled (or cancelled). You begin to realise your crimes when you have committed them and when you have been punished for them. Let those, who have seen these foul deeds being punished, learn lessons from them by analysing them. Foul instincts by indulgence (practice) grow more mischievous more foul just like animal that are fattened by feeding and that have to bleed afterwards; when they are butchered for human food. *Exeunt.*

Volpone *comes forward.*

The value or worth of a play depends upon its appreciation.

Although the fox has been punished by the laws yet he believes that he does not deserve any further punishment from the audience for any act, he might have committed before them. If he has committed any such fault, rebuke him ; here he stands before you all for your censure. But if he has done no fault, you could feel happy and express your appreciation by clapping your hands

[*Exit.*

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

THE ARGUMENT

Feigns—pretends. **Hopes of several heirs**—*i.e.*, those who expect to inherit Volpone's wealth. **Languishing**—*i.e.*, losing in health. **Parasite**—Mosca, a hanger-on or dependent upon Volpone and who exploits Volpone just as a parasite (an animal or a plant) lives at the expense of another animal or bird. **Deludes**—misleads or cheats. **Weaves**—plans, **Cross plots**—counterplots. **Ope themselves**—unweave or distangle or solve themselves. **Thrive**—prosper or succeed. **When bold**—*i.e.* when encouraged by the success of the tricks. **Each tempts the other again**—each of the candidates for the wealth of Volpo ne tries to cheat the other candidates for the same ; or it may mean that Mosca and Volpone by turns try to cheat each other. **All are sold**—al! are cheated.

PROLOGUE

Prologue—a prologue is an introduction to a play. **Make our play hit**—make the play, Volpone, successful or interesting to the audience. **The palates of the season**—*i.e*. the tastes of the people. **Empty of reason**—without any argument or substance. **Credit from our poet**—announce on behalf of the poet *i.e.* Ben Jonson. **True scope**—real aim. **This measure**—this standard. **To mix profit with your pleasure**—*i.e.* to instruct the audience as well as to entertain them. **Whose throats their envy failing**—whose voice is choked due to extreme jealousy. **Cry hoarsely**—shout bitterly. **Railing**—abusing or cursing. **Flout**—mock or treat with contempt. **Was a year about them**—was engaged for about a year in writing each of his plays indicating thereby that Ben Jonson is very slow in bringing out his plays which means in other words, that he is not at all talented.

This big creature—*i.e.*, this play, *Volpone*, which has been composed by Ben Jonson. **Since no feature**—*i.e.* when this play was in its beginning and hence when it was shapeless. **Dares give......mend it**—challenges any other dramatist to find out any flaw or defect in this play. **Five weeks fully penned it**—*i.e.* it took only five weeks for Ben Jonson to complete the composition of this play, *Volpone*.

Co-adjutor—collaborator *i.e.* co-worker. **Novice, journeyman**—*i.e.* a beginner in the art of play-writing. **Token**—mark. **No eggs are broken**—no vulgar tricks were employed to amuse the audience. **Nor quaking custards.........affrighted**—*i.e.* no custard (a preparation of egg and milk) was thrown at the frightened audience because custard would spoil the clothes; or in other words, no vulgar trick was employed as it used to be employed in the burlesques in order to lend vulgar enjoyment to the audience.

The rout—the common people or the illiterate audience. **Hales**—calls or invites. **Gull**—a fool. **Old ends**—stale jokes borrowed from old writers. **Reciting**—uttering or announcing. **To stop gaps**—to make up the deficiencies. **Loose writing**—illcomposed play. **Such a deal.........action**—*i.e.* so much of unnatural behaviour. **As might......faction**—as would annoy even the mad men in Bethlem Hospital in London which is a lunatic asylum. **Faction**—a strife or quarrel. **Stolen from each table**—borrowed from every writer. **To fit his fable**—to suit his story. **Quick comedy refined**—a lively and decent comic play. **The laws of place time, persons**—*i.e.* the Unities of Time, Place and Action in a play. **Swerveth**—makes a departure or violation. **All gall and copperas**—*i.e.* all kinds of ironical and satirical remarks. **Draineth**—removes or takes away.

A little salt—*i.e.* some fun or humour. **Rub your cheeks**—make you look bright or red in the cheeks by rubbing salt on them *i.e.* make you cheerful with laughter.

ACT I

Scene I

Good morning to the day—greetings to the sun. Volpone greets the sun first because the sun is the source of life and light to all creatures in this world. **The shrine**—the temple *i.e.* the chest which contains gold. **My saint**—*i.e.* gold which Volpone worships. **Piles**—heaps. **The world's soul**—gold is indeed the source of life to all people because without it one cannot even exist in the world, not to speak of enjoying comforts, pleasures, power which gold alone can secure or buy. **Teeming earth**—*i.e.* earth on which so many things grow such as human beings, birds, beasts, insects, flies, reptiles, snakes etc that live on land, in water and in air **The longed-for sun** - *i.e* the sun which the earth wants to greet every day because without the rays of the sun nothing on earth can exist or grow. **The horus of the celestial Ram** - The first sign of the zodiac through which the sun passes in the beginning of the spring season.

Splendour—glory or brightness. **Darkening his**—overshadowing the brightness of the sun. It is not that the gold is actually brighter than the sun but surely, gold is much dearer than the sun to those who love or worship gold. **Other hoards**—other precious things. **Struck out of chaos**—derived or originated from a state of confusion. The world or rather the sun was created out of darkness and confusion. This is only a superstitious theory of some of the world philosophers. **The centre**—*i.e.* not the centre but the other side of the earth when one side of the earth is lighted, the other side of the earth must be thrown into complete darkness.

Son of sol—the sun god. In alchemy, gold is the son of sol. **Thy father**—*i.e.* the sun **Adoration**—worship or great reverence. **Every relick of sacred treasure**—*i.e.* every other precious article. **The glorious name**—*i.e.* the name, 'golden'. **Transcending**—excelling. **Thy looks**—*i.e.* the brightness of gold **Venus**—the goddess of love.

Ascribe—attach. **Twenty thousand Cupids**—*i.e.* an attraciton which is exerted more than the influence exerted by twenty thousand Cupids or gods of love. **Thy beauties**—*i.e.* the attractions of gold. **Dear saint**—beloved goddess of gold. **The dumb god**—gold is dumb by itself. **It gives all men tongues**—*i.e.* even a dumb creature would be able to speak if he gets gold *i.e.* even impossible things can be achieved or performed by gold. This is very true because everybody is a slave to gold or wealth. **Nought**—nothing. **Makest men do all things**—gold or money can tempt a person to do any foulest or meanest thing. **The price of souls**—with gold or money one can buy a person's conscience or kill a person's moral sense **To boot**—in addition. **Made worth heaven**—*i.e.* made a very blessed place. **Valiant**—bold or courageous.

Riches...nature—wealth or gold is far more useful or serviceable than wisdom (*i.e.* the sense of justice, the power of distinguishing between the right and the wrong). **Cunning purchase**—clever way of securing gold. **Gain no common way**—*i.e.* do not earn money by the same means or method as ordinary people do. **Venture**—risking money in gambling. **Wound no earth with ploughshares**—*i.e.* do not grow rich by cultivating lands and growing corns or vegetables or fruits. **Fat no beasts...shambles**—do no fatten the animals in order to sell them to the slaughter-house, and thereby to earn money. **Mills for iron**—workshops for manufacturing iron articles or machines, with which to earn money. **Blow no subtle glass**—run no glass factory to earn money. **Expose no ships**—*i.e.* carry no trade by sending out ships on the sea and thereby risking them to be sunk into the sea by storm or submarine rock.

Threatenings of the furrow-faced sea—*i.e.* threatenings of the storm which creates deep furrows in water of the sea in which ships are lost. **Usure private**—*i.e.* earn money by lending on interest as the Jews do. **Devour soft prodigal**—*i.e.* squeeze out money from the extravagant persons who borrow money on heavy interests.

A melting heir—a submissive or timid sort of a landlord. **As your Dutch-butter**—as the Dutch people consume huge quantities of butter without having any diarrhoea.

Never purge for it—never develop diarrhoea for taking too much of butter. **Glibly**—easily. **Coffin them alive**—put them in a solitary cell which is as good as confining them a coffin or a box that holds their dead bodies ; or which is as good as death for them. **When the flesh is rotten**—when the body is decomposed. **Tear forth the fathers of poor families**—*i.e.* forcibly or unlawfully imprison the heads of the poor families who are unable to pay the rent or the revenue. **Abhor**—hate. **Lothe**—hate. **Ring in your roofs**—resound the rooms of your house. **Beat the air for vengeance**—*i. e.* cry for revenge.

Thresher—one who separates the grain from the husk. **Fill**—a club-like thing with which to separate the grains from the husk. **Mallows**—flowering plants. **Bitter herbs**—plants which are unpleasant to the taste, and hence, not eatable. **Vaults**—underground cellars for storing up wines. **Romagnia**—Greek wine. **Lees**—the bitter drops that lie at the bottom of a wine glass or wine vessel. **Lombard's vinegar**—*i.e.* some kind of bitter alcohol which is not drinkable. **Sumptuous hangings**—rich curtains. **Poor observer**—an admirer who is financially poor. **Hermaphrodite**—one who has the qualities of both the sexes. **Eunuch**—one who do does not belong to any of the two sexes *i.e.* one who is neuter in gender or sex. **What other household...maintenance**—whichever other servant or menial you may have in your house or in your service. **Strikest on truth in all**—*i. e.* always speak the truth. **They are envious...parasite**—those who call you by the name of parasite are jealous of you. **Make me sport**—*i.e.* entertain me with funs.

Cooker up my genius—give free play to my brains. **Live free...me to**—*i.e.* enjoy all sorts of pleasure whichever my wealth can buy or secure. **Ally**—friend **My substance** my wealth or property. **Each greedy minute**—every moment

of my nearing death which the candidates for my wealth eagerly await. **Return tenfold**—*i.e.* be multiplied many times. **Covetous**—greedy **Above the rest**—more than other candidates for Volpone's wealth. **Engross me whole**—*i.e.* monopolise my favour entirely. **Counter-work ..the other**—play tricks upon one another in order to spoil the designs of the rival candidates for Volpone's wealth.

Ointed in gifts—compete with one another in offering presents to Volpone. **As they would seem in love**—as lovers compete with one another in order to win the heart of their common beloved. **Suffer** allow. **Playing with their hopes**—*i.e.* tempting them falsely with the hope of making them my heirs. **Coin them into profit**—*i.e.* turn everything to my advantage. **Still bearing them in hand**—*i.e.* always tempting them with false hopes of inheritance of my wealth. **Letting the cherry lips**—bringing the temptation too near them. **Draw it by their...mouths**—*i.e.* taking away the temptation from them again.

Scene II

Gamesters — those actors who will entertain the audience with funs. **University show**—Masques and plays which used to be presented at the University during ceremonial occasions. **Rehearse**—play or exhibit. **Fare a whiet the worse**—appear to be any way inferior. **The false pace of the verse**—*i.e.* defective rhythm of the verse. **When we pass**—*i.e.* when we go out of the stage or when we have shown all the funs. **Pythagoras**—the ancient Greek philosopher who believed in the transmigration of the human soul through different bodies, of birds, animals, vegetables, plants etc. **The juggler divine** *i.e.* Pythagoras who like a juggler believing in passing the human soul from one body to another. **Fast and loose**—by some trick. **Had the gift to remember...one** had the power to recollect things about one's previous birth or life. **Godly-locked**—*i.e.* having flowing locks of hair like those of a god. **In good fashion** *i.e.* justly **Cuckold**—a person whose wife is a faithless woman. **Cuckold of Sparta**

—*i.e.* Menelaus. King of Sparta, whose wife Helen ran away with Paris which led to the Trojan War. **Charta**—*i.e.* chart, or map. **Pyrrhus of Delos**—a fisherman **To go a-fishing**—to go for catching fish. **The sophist of Greece**—*i.e.* Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher. **Beautiful piece**—beautiful creature.

Hight—called. Aspasia—she became the mistress of Pericles. She attracted most of the best literary and philosophical geniuses of Greece. Even Socrates used to visit her. After the death of Pericles, Aspasia took interest in one Lysicles, a dealer in cattle, whom she trained into a first-class orator. **Meretrix**—a prostitute. **Whore**—a prostitute.

The next toss of her—*i.e.* the next transmigration or change of Aspasia. **Crates the cynic**—he was a well-known cynic philosopher and disciple of the famous cynic Diogenes. A cynic is one who finds only the evil and not any good in the world and naturally he hates the world and human life. **In the cobbler's cock**—in *Lucian's Dream* the soul in the form of a cock relates the story of its transmigration to its master the cobbler.

His one, two oath—Pythagoras explained the origin of the universe in terms of numbers. The great oath of Pythagoras was *tetractys* or a group of four. **Quarter**—four each, or *quaterinio*. **Trigon** the theorem of Pythagoras was that in a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. **Shift**—change. **Translation** change. **Shift... reformation**—The doctrine of Pythagoras suffered a change in the days of Reformation, which was a religious movement started by Martin Luther during the sixteenth century, in order to bring about some reform in the various doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, as the result of which the Protestant Churches came into existence. Student should note that Ben Jonson was a Roman Catholic. **Heresie**—wrong or false doctrine.

Forbid meats—Pythagoras advised his disciples not to eat fish or meat or beans because they were made of the same stuff as human beings were made at the time of their birth or because the human soul could pass into such creatures (fish, animal and vegetables) after the death of one body which was not death but a mere change in the eyes of Pythagoras. **Hast thou ventured**—has dared to disobey the rules of Pythagoras, namely, not to eat fish or meat or vegetables.

Carthusian—a monk of the religious order (sect) which was founded by St. Bruno in France. **Dogmatical silence**—Pythagoras enjoined upon his disciples to practise silence for five years. **Obstreperous**—noisy. **For Pythagora's sake**—*i.e.* according to the Pythagorian law or doctrine of transmigration of the soul. **Bereft**—deprived.

Allow of the eating of beans—the practice of eating beans which was forbidden by Pythagoras on the ground that beans might contain the soul of anybody's forefather, or on the ground that beans are made of the same stuff as human bodies are made. **Illuminate brother**—intelligent relative, the ass is called here a more intelligent brother than the mule, although we know that the ass is the most foolish creature on earth.

Of those devour flesh—*i.e.* the Puritans who eat meat. **Sometimes one another**—this is an attack on the Puritans because they used to wage strifes on religious questions. **Drop you forth a libel**—*i.e.* make a personal attack on you. **A sanctified lie**—a false statement in the name of religion. **Nativity pie**—Christmas pudding. **Quit thee**—drop the matter. **That profane nation**—that unholy sect of the Puritans.

Next transmigration—next change. **In all thy variation**—in all the changes through which you have passed during the process of transmigration of your soul. **To keep up thy station**—to stick to a permanent form of your existence. **Troth, this I am in**—surely, I want to remain

permanently in my present form that is, as a hermaphrodite. **Here would I tarry**—I would like to stick to or retain my present form of a hermaphrodite. **The delight of each sex**—the pleasures of both the sexes. **Canst vary**—can enjoy by turns or in the form of a change.

Those pleasures be stale and forsaken—the pleasures of both the sexes have become old, dull and hackneyed. Androgyno means to say that whether you enjoy the male or female sex, there is no fresh charm about it because from the very dawn of creation all creatures, men, birds and beasts have been indulging in sex enjoyments; and that is why, such pleasures have no special charm for Androgyno. But our question is, can sex pleasures ever cease to lose their charm ?

So taken—so much attracted. **Most distressed**—most unsuitable. **In Pythagora's still**—*i.e.*, still governed by the law of transmigration. **This learned opinion**—the wise theory that the fool is the happiest creature on earth. **Celebrate**—publish or announce. **As behoves us**—as far as we are capable ; or as it suits us. **Wit and art**—intelligence and skill. **If it please......not else**—if you are pleased with the entertainment, than I would say that the whole show was designed by me, otherwise not. **Sorrow-taking**—infection of grief due to any kind of misfortune. **Selves and others merry-making**—the fools enjoy themselves as well as provide food for enjoyment to others. **Sterling**—*i.e*, something really valuable. **Great man's darling**—favourite of the men in high position **Ladie's sport**-a source of fun and enjoyment for respectable women. **Bauble**—a staff carried by a fool. **Tongue-treasure**—it is with the tongue and with the bauble that the fool makes people laugh, and that is why, these two things are most useful implements in his hand. **Begetteth**—produces.

Free from slaughter—without any fear of punishment. The fools are privileged to speak any amount of nonsense about any person, and yet they are never taken to task for

that. **Grace**—ornament. **Trencher**—a wooden plate full of eatables. **Wit waits upon the fool**—the wise people listen to the fool. **My couch is changing**—my bed is shifted from one corner to another. This is of course, a pretext which Volpone wants to convey to Voltore in order to detain him outside for some time. **Entertain himself a while** *i.e.*, wait outside for some time. **My clients**—*i.e* candidates for my wealth.

Visitation—visits. **Vulture, kite......gor crow**—these are the names of various kinds of birds that generally live on the dead bodies; and they stand here for the persons who are candidates for the wealth of Volpone and who are waiting eagerly for his death. **Birds of prey**—*i.e.*, birds who live on other brids, here they stand for the candidates for Volpone's wealth. **Carcase**—dead body. **I am not for them yet** *i.e.*, I am not going to die soon so that they may inherit my wealth. **Massy**—heavy. **Antique**—old-fashioned. **Inscribed** — written. **Delusive sights**—deceptive tricks. **Mocking a gaping crow**—feeling jealous of the crow who is perching upon the tree and holding some article of food in his mouth; or the fox may stand here for Volpone who is designing all sorts of tricks in order to squeeze out precious presents from the various candidates for his wealth, while the candidates themselves represent the crow and are foolishly waiting for the death of Volpone in order to inherit his wealth. **Arms**—heraldic bearings. **Sharp**—quick. **Apprehend**—think; discover. **Fetch you**—win your heart and favour. **What he......tomorrow**—how much wealthy he would be by inheriting your wealth. **Return**—profit. **All his ventures**—all the gifts he has presented to Volpone.

Ride with his furs—*i. e.*, make a parade or show of his respectable dress. **Foot-cloths**—saddle cloths **As lettered as himself**—as literate or learned as himself. This is said ironically, because it is not a compliment to a man to be as learned as a mule. **Hood**—cover of the head. **Reverend purple**—holy purple cloth. **Ambitious ears**—prominent ears, (*i. e.*, marks of outstanding stupidity),

Cathedral doctor -*i. e.*, Cardinal. **Ointment**—paint. **Dispatch** - send for Voltore. **Lost in blended dust**—*i. e.*, dead and buried.**Hundred such ..succession**—*i e.*, many persons like myself will die one after another. **Delude these harpies**—deceive these greedy persons who are candidates for the wealth of Volpone. **Harpies**—winged-monsters that have the face of a woman and claws and tail like those of a vulture. **Feigned** - pretended. **Phthisic**—consumptive or tubercular. **Aoplexy**—high blood pressure. **Palsy**—trembling of the limbs or some kind of paralysis. **Gout**—rheumatism. **Catarrhs**—bronchial troubles **Forced functions**—artificial operation of the bodily system. **This my posture**—*i. e.*, lying in bed like an invalid.

Scene III.

You still are what you were—*i. e.*, you are still in the good books or graces or favour of my master *i. e.*, Volpone.

Commends his love—shows his attachment. **Visitation**—visit. **Kind notes of your good meaning to him**—*i e* , tokens of love and regards for Volpone. **Come most grateful**—will be accepted most thankfully. **Antique**—ancient. Ancient things have got a much greater value than modern things in the eyes, particularly of the old people.

St. Mark—the famous market-place in Venice.

Munificent—generous if presenting precious gifts.

Would to heaven—*i. e.*, pray to God. **Your love hath taste in this**—your love is sufficiently expressed in the gift of this plate. **Unanswered**—unrewarded. **Hearken**—listen. **Happy man**—lucky man. **Know your good**—see your good luck.

Feel me going—feel as if I am going to die soon. **Sailing to my port**—completing my journey on earth *i.e.*, going to die soon **Haven**—shelter in the other world *i e.*, death. **We must all go**—we must all die. **Age will conquer**—*i. e.*, old

men wi'l survive or will not die. **Insc'ibed**—mentioned in writi'g or in the will **Vouch safe**—favourably grant. **To write me in your family**—to count me as one of your family members or dependents **Except the rising sun do shine on me**—unless the persons, who are fortunate, are kind to me. **It shall both shine and warm thee**—*i. e.*, I shall not only help you but will sufficiently reward for your services when I shall be the heir to your master's fortunes.

Hath not done your love all the worst offices—*i. e.*, has done all possible good services. **Coffers**—treasure chest. **Inventory**—list of various articles. **Monies**—silver and gold coins. **Steward**—manager, *i. e.*, Munshi. **Husband your goods**—*i. e.*, look after your possessions.' **Sole heir**—exclusive successor to Volpone's wealth and property. **Confirmed**—finally secured. **The wax is warm yet**—*i. e*, the seal is quite fresh. **The ink scarce dry**—the signature is quite fresh. **Parchment**—paper of the will.

Desert—merit. **I know no second cause**—I do not know of any other reason for which you have been selected as the only heir to Volpone's wealth and proper'y. **The modesty is no to know it**—it is out of sheer modesty that you are not confessing that you are the real cause of my appointment as the successor to Volpone.

Requite—reward. **That first took him**—that first impressed him. **Your large profession**—*i e.*, the legal profession which is ironically a noble profession. **Speak to every cause**—defend every position.

Things mere contraries—positions or arguments which are contradictory to each other. **Hoarse**—broken down in voice because of the loud pleading. **Yet all be law again**—in spite of the opposing or contradictory arguments to maintain consistency and reconcile the opposing positions or the contradictory arguments.

Quick agility—great promptness. **Could turn and return**—could charge the position of a case by means of agruments as the lawyers generally do. **Make knots**—*i. e.*,

complicate a case. **Undo them**—*i.e.*, solve a case or a problem. **Forked counsel**—*i. e.*, arguments which can defend both the sides of the complainant and the defendent. **Take provoking gold on either hand**—accept money or fees for defending both the sides of a case **Put it up**—defend both the sides of a case. **These men**—*i. e.*, the lawyers. **Thrive with their humility**—prosper due to their modest ways (said ironically). **Such a suffering spirit**—*i.e.*, a lawyer with modesty or humility. **So perplexed a tongue**—*i. e.*, possessing a tongue that can put forward contradictory argumeants for or against a case and thereby complicating or confusing it so that the judge is unable to give any fair judgment over it.

Wag—move or utter words and arguments. **Lie still**—*i. e.*, keep quiet without uttering any word or giving any argument. **Chequin**—some gold coin. **Fashion an excuse**—invent some pretext. **Swin in golden lard**—*i.e.*, roll in money. **Your chin is borne up stiff** *i. e.*, look proud. **With fatness of the flood**—with a big income of wealth. **Vassal**—subordinate. **I have not been your worst of clients**—*i. e.*, I have proved to be most serviceable to you. **Put business in your face**—look busy. **The vulture**—*i. e.* Voltore, the lawyer. **The old raven**—*i. e.* Corbaccio, the merchant.

Scene IV.

Stand there and multiply—these words are addressed to the plate ; Mosca asks the plate to remain in the treasure-chest and wishes that more such precious presents (gifts) should be offered to Volpone and thereby add to his wealth. **More important than this can feign to be**—more crippled than Volpone who merely pretends to be a cripple. **No amends**—no improvement in health. **Mends he ?**—is he really improving in health ? Corbaccio does not want Volpone to get better in health because if Volpone does not die soon, Corbaccio cannot inherit his wealth.

No wink—no sleep for a moment. **Slumbers**—*i. e.*, doze or falls into drowziness but not any sound sleep.

Opiate—a medicine that produces sleep. **Drugs**—medicines. **Stood by** —*i. e.* observed personally. **Ingredients**—constituents or elements. **My life for this**—I stake my life on the harmlessness of the drug *i. e.* I am prepared to lose my life if the drug proves to be any way harmful. **His last sleep**—*i e.* his death. **Physic** medicine. **Say you, say you?** —what do you say? Students should note that Corbaccio is hard of hearing. **The greater danger**—more harmful. **Worse disease**—a more dangerous thing. **To escape**—to escape from the hands of a doctor who is so greedy of money and who kills a patient in order to earn money, by prescribing wrong and dangerous medicines.

Brook—tolerate. **Flay**—fleece *i.e.* rob mercilessly. **Conceive you**—understand you. **Absolve them**—*i. e.* free the doctors from paying penalties. **Loth**—unwilling. **Hire his death**—*i. e.* pay money to a doctor for prescribing dangerous medicines and thereby killing Volpone **With as much license as a judge**—with as much freedom as a judge passes the sentence of hanging the criminals. **He but kills where the law condemns**—a judge passes the sentence of death upon a person when law permits him to do so. **These can kill him too**—doctors can kill even the judge who passes the sentence of death upon the criminals. **Apoplex**—apoplexy or blood-pressure which produces unconsciousness and causes death. **His eyes are set**—his eyes have sunken into the sockets.

Drawn longer.—grown thinner. **It was vont**—it was usual. **Freezing numbness**—a very cold deadening of the sensibilities. **Like lead**—*i. e.* very pale. **Good symptoms still**—*i. e.* these are clear signs of his approaching death. **Rheum**—watery secretion. **Resolved corners**—fixed or motionless corners. **Yet I am better**—Corbaccio means to say that he is much better in health than Volpone although he is much older than Volpone.

The swimming of his head—the giddiness or whirling sensation in the head. **Past the scotomy**—*i. e.* a much worse condition than that of dizziness in the head and

dimness in the eyes. **Left to snort**—*i. e.* no longer snores during sleep. **Outlast him**—live longer than Volpone. **A score of years**—*i. e.* twenty years. **He smelt a carcase**—he (Voltore) thought that Volpone was dead. **About his testament**—was going to make his will. **Urge him to it**—persuade Volpone to make a will. **By your own scale**—by your own judgment.

Outweigh down his plates—*i. e.* prove much more precious than the plate presented by Voltore. **This great elixir**—*i. e.* the bag of gold coins will prove to be a much better restorative of health than the best medicine of any doctor. **Aurum palpabile**—*i. e.* solid gold. **Aurum potabile**—some tincture of gold but not pure or solid gold ; and hence, it is inferior to *aurum palpable* or real gold. **Ministered**——applied or given. **Bowl**—a vessel for containing medicine. **Cordial**—restorative of health *i. e.* a drink that improves health. **Forbear**—stop or prevent. **Take my venture**—get back the bag of gold coins. **At no hand**—by no means. **Do yourself that wrong**—harm yourself by taking back the bag of gold coins. **Have it all**—*i. e.* enjoy all the wealth and property of Volpone along with this bag of gold coins. **Without a rival**—without any sharer. **Decreed by destiny**—ordained by Providence or God or Fate.

This fit—this temporary illness. **On his first advantage of his gained sense**—as soon as he comes back to his senses.

Reimportune—urge again. **Testament**—will. **Inscribe**—write or mention in writing. **That colour shall make it much more taking**—if you disinherit your son by willing all your property and wealth in favour of Volpone he will all the more be tempted to make you the sole successor to his wealth and property.

But colour :—Corbaccio either does not understand what Mosca says or he wants to know if he would make the will only in pretension in favour of Volpone. **Inforce**—press your claims. **Your cares**—your anxieties

for Volpone. **Your watchings**—your vigilance over the health of Volpone. **Your many prayers**—your prayers to God for the recovery of Volpone's health.

Your proper issue—your legitimate son. **Highly meriting**—greatly deserving. **The stream of your diverted love hath thrown you upon my master**—the love which you owe to your son by the law of nature has been transferred to you, which would prove that you love Volpone much more than you love your own son. **Stone dead**—most insensible. **Out of conscience**—out of a sense of justice, duty or fairness.

Pronounce me his—declare me as his successor. **Project**—scheme or plan. **Lusty**—vigorous or healthy. **He should be the very organ to express my thoughts**—*i.e.* he should be thinking of the same plan of which I have been thinking. **Multiplied it on my son**—*i.e.* added to the property and wealth of my son. **My invention**—my plan which I have hatched. **Grow gray withal**—grow old with cares and anxieties about the welfare of Corbaccio. **I will straight about it**—*i.e.* I shall immediately prepare a will in favour of Volpone. **Rook**—a cheat (a card-sharper). **Raven**—*i.e.* Corbaccio. **Rook go with you, raven**—get away, you fool and a cheat. **Your knowledge is no better than your ears**—*i.e.* you are as stupid as you are deaf. **A father to thee**—*i.e.* your patron. **Nor I to gull my brother of his blessing**—I have no doubt that I shall deprive Corbaccio's son of his inheritance.

Precious ass—a big fool. **I shall burst**—I shall burst with joy and laughter to see how you have been able to make a fool of Corbaccio. **Let out my sides**—let my sides of the body relax otherwise I shall literally burst, and my sides of the body will open and I shall die. **Flux**—tide or stream or flow or strong impulse. **It covers any hook**—hope of inheritance serves as a bait to anybody. **Thy lacing it**—your manner of playing the trick upon Corbaccio. **I cannot hold**—I cannot resist my laughter. **In rare a humour**—*i.e.* so tricky. **Give them words**—express your ideas or put your plans into action. **Pour oil into their ears**—speak sweet words to them.

Avarice—greed for money. **Maladies**—illnesses or diseases. **Death so often called on**—the thought of death comes so frequently to the old people. **Their seeing, hearing going**—*i. e.* their powers of seeing and hearing things failing them, or growing very weak, with the advance of old age. **All dead before them**—all the sense organs of the old people seem to be as good as dead. **Instruments of eating**—*i. e.* teeth with which one eats one's food.

Reckoned—regarded. **This is reckoned life**—even when a person grows very weak in his sense-organs in extreme old age, he feels that he is alive just as Corbaccio with his weak eyes and ears believes that he is healthy and strong and also that he will live longer than Volpone. **Gout**—a kind of rheumatism. **Palsy**—a kind of paralysis or deadening of the sensibilities. **Feigns**—belives foolishly. **Scores**—several times of twenty years; one score makes twenty. **Flatters his age** falsely believes in youthfulness and health even in extreme old age. **With confident belying it**—*i. e.* strongly disbelieving in the failure of energy and health in old age. **Aeson**—father of Jason, the great Greek hero. He was restored to youth by the magic of Jason's wife. **Battens**—feeds on empty dreams.

As if fate would be as easily cheated—as if this kind of false belief in health and energy would bring back youthfulness in old age. **All turns air**—*i. e.* every kind of deficiency of old age could completely disappear. **Spruce**—smart or cunning. **Bout** application of some ointment. **Another bout with your eyes** - Mosca suggests that Volpone should apply once more some ointment to his eyes so that he may look most shrunken and drooping in health.

Scene V.

Most wished for most eagerly awaited. **The tardy hour**—the hour of death which had been slowly approaching. **He knows no man** - *i. e.* has not got any sufficient power of consciousness to recognise a person. **Remembrance**—power of recognition. **Orient**—belonging to the Eastern

countries (because anything belonging to the Eastern countries has got a much greater value in the eyes of the Western people. **It doubles the twelfth caract**—*i.e.* it is twenty-four carats in weight. **It is only there he apprehends**—it is only by touch that he can feel things. **Tut**—nonsense. **Visor**—a mask or a cover.

The weeping of an heir should still be laughter under a visor—a successor to property should rejoice at heart but hide his rejoicing by means of tears which he should express on account of the illness or death of the person whom he is going to succeed in the inheritance of property.

Gaping—waiting eagerly. **Legacies**—inheritance of wealth and property. **Executor**—one who gets a will executed in his favour. **The nods**—the bending or boring of the head as a mark of assent or consent. **Bequeathed**—willed some property as a gift. **To cry and curse**—to lament in sorrow and to abuse the person who has not made any gift to the person who wanted to be the successor. **Perceive us**—recognise us. **Harper**—one who plays upon a musical instrument called 'harp'.

Begotten — produced or brought to the world **Bastards**—*i. e.* illegitimate children. **Gypsies**—nomads or wandering persons. **Black Moors**—people of dark complexion belonging to North-West Afrcia. **The common fable**—the well-known story. **Eunuch**—a person who belongs to the neuter gender *i.e.* one who is neither male nor female. **Save**—except. **Credit your own sense**—test his (Volpone's) power of hearing by your own sense organ. **Send you hence**—send you from this world *i.e.* kill you. **Incontinence**—licentiousness *i. e.* loose character. **The plague to boot**—either the disease of plague which is a very painful disease or any kind of extreme physical torture as an additional penalty for debauchery. **Slime**—a kind of foul secretion. **Fring pits**—*i.e.* collections of foul secretion. **Frozen dish-clouts set on end**—*i.e.* dirty linens for washing plates and other utensils, and these linens have grown stiff with a heavy coating of dirt.

Smoked wall — dirty and dark-looking wall. **In streaks**—in irregular streams. **Culverin** — a hand-gun. **Would hardly bore it**—would scarecly be audible to his ear. **Sewer**—under ground drain through which all dirt and filth are drawn out. **Still running**—always flowing. **Draught**—drain or gutter. **Stifle him**—suffocate him to death. **Scrupulous**—hesitating. **At your discretion**—just as you like. **Afflicts**—troubles or pains. **Your creature**—your dependent.

Gallant—good-looking. **We had no other means..... but this**—we could not drive him out from our presence except by mentioning his pretty wife. **Divine** - wonderful. **Outgone thyself**—surpassed your own skill *i.e.* acted in a super-excellent manner. **Banquets**—grand feasts. **The Turk is no more sensual**—the Turks are well-known for indulging in all sorts of sensual enjoyments. particularly, in the enjoyment of women. **Good morning's purchase**—lucky gifts of the morning. **This is better than rob churches**—to earn money by receiving gifts from people on the temptation of appointing them as successors to property is a better method than by playing the role of a clergyman and telling lies to people and misleading them, or by misappropriating the money of the religious funds and endowments.

Fat by eating once a month a man—to grow fat by eating the flesh of a man every month. It may mean either actually killing a man or eating his flesh, because there is a common belief that one can grow fat by eating human flesh.

This is the style, sir, is directed me—these are the very words by which the lady has asked me to introduce her to you. **Fore Heaven**—in the name of God (a kind of oath) **Desperate valour**—undue courage. **Squire**—servant of a lady or a gentleman. **All encounters**—all sorts of meetings with unknown persons **Politick**—diplomatic or clever. **Affect strange airs**—pretend to put on strange manners or attitude. **She hath not yet the face to be**

dishonest—she is neither young nor beautiful at persent to tempt persons. **Had she Signior Corvino's wife's face**—if she were as beautiful as the wife of Mr. Corvino, (she would have reasons to tempt persons)

The blazing star of Italy—the prettiest woman of Italy. **Wench**—woman. **Of the first year**—*i.e.* as fresh or young as the flower of the earliest spring. **A beauty ripe as harvest**—a young woman who is the fittest to be enjoyed. **Eternity of kissing**—*i. e.* endless kisses. **Flesh that melteth in the touch to blood**—*i. e.* very soft flesh. **Warily**—carefully. **Come abroad**—come out of the house. **First grapes**—the grapes which appear first in the season. **Watched as near**—*i. e.* observed very closely.

Ten thick—*i. e.* very thickly or strictly. **Set upon his fellow**—*i. e.* made to spy upon his fellow-worker. **Have all their charge**—*i. e.* the spies are made to spy upon one another. **My own shape**—my real appearance.

ACT II.

Scene I.

To a wise man all the world is his soil—to an intelligent person, the whole world is as good as his own native country *i. e.* a wise man feels perfectly at home in every part of the world. **Round**—confine or restrict the boundary. **Call me forth**—urge me to go out of my native place or country. **Salt desire**—desire for sea voyage or travel to foreign countries. **Shifting a religion**—*i.e.* changing one's own religion by embracing another religion. **Disaffection to the state**—*i.e.* disloyalty to the government **Plots**—plans. **Antique**—very old or queer. **Gray headed**—old. **Project**—plan or scheme. **Ulysses**—the ancient Greek hero who went out on a world voyage in order to gather knowledge of the countries and the peoples in the world.

Peculiar humour—strange fancy or desire. **Laid for his height of Venice**—planned for visiting Venice, the seat of the greatest culture, manners, fashions etc. **With**

licence –with a passport. **I dare the safelier converse**—to travel with a passport is definitely a safer course. **Lately** - recently. **Lord Ambassador**—Sir Henry Wotton was the British Ambassador in Venice from 1604 to 1613 Sir Politick is merely a caricture of Sir Henry Wooton.

Vents our climate—*i.e.* brought from our country (England). **Lord's followers**—*i.e.* members of the British Embassy in Venice. **It will be seconded**—the report will be confirmed. **Gull me** make a fool of me. **Is gulled**—is making a fool of himself. **Trow**—think. **That speaks him** - his very name expresses his character. **Intelligence**—information **Tires**—either ornaments or decorations for the body or mere dress, because 'tire' may be the contracted form of 'attire. **Courtesans**—prostitutes. **The spider and the bee, oft times, suck from one flower**—the spider, which is a poisonous creature, and the bee which is a collector of honey, often go to the same flower for collecting their material *i.e.* both bad and good persons can collect poison and food from the same source.

I cry you mercy—I pray to God for blessing you. **Your raven**—*i.e.* the raven that built its nest in the royal ship. **Whelping** - giving birth to cubs. **The Tower**—the tower of London, which was formerly a prison-house but later on it was converted into a zoo. **Prodigies**—unusual happenings or things **Fires** - meteors or shooting stars. **The new star**—the star discovered by Kepler ; it looked brighter than the Jupiter. **Concurring**—occurring at the same time. **Full of omen**—full of evil signs.

Porpoises—sea animals. **Sturgeon**—some kind of fish. **A greater prodigy**--a more unusual thing. **Portend**—indicate. **Put forth**—started the journey. **Whale**—the biggest sea-fish. **Subversion** - sinking into the water. **The Stode fleet**—the English fleet. **The archdukes**—Infanta Isabella and her husband Albert who ruled over the Spanish Netherlands.

Spinola's whale—Spinola, the Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Army sent a huge whale to drown London

by sprouting water through its mouth. Whales can take in and take out huge quantities of water through their mouth; but it is surely impossible to drown a city with that water.

Upon my life—to be sure. **My credit**—my firm belief. **These projects**—these conspiracies of Spain to destroy England. **Stone the fool**—a popular jester who was flogged for abusing an English Lord. **Write but such a fellow**—paint the character of such a jester as Mass Stone. **Feign extremely**—pretend in a very absurd or impossible manner. **Maliciously**—with some evil motive. **Apprehend**—in service as a spy. **Intelligence**—information. **Dispensed**—conveyed. **Apricocks** *i. e.* apricots. **Pome-citrons**—a species of pomegranate. **Oyster**—a kind of sea creature out of which pearls are collected. **Cockles**—molluses, which are eatable. **Public ordinary**—*i.e.*, an inn or a tavern. **A concealed statesman**—a politician in disguise. **Trencher**—tray or dish. **Tooth-pick**—a small stick with which to pick out the food particles from the mouth (teeth). **Read the cipher**—understand the meaning of the peculiar shapes and signs. **So laid**—so shaped or placed in the dish in such a manner. **Given out**—reported. **In policy**—out of some special motive. **And to it as sound a noddle**—*i.e.* quite a good brain for understanding those mysterious signs and symbols. **Baboons**--a species of monkeys. **Subtlenation**--mysterious or cunning race.

Mamaluchi—Mamelukes or Arab slaves who became the rulers of Egypt. **Given to woman**—addicted to sexual enjoyments. **Advices**—informations. **One of their own coat**—*i.e.* one of the members of the same body or party. **Made their relations**—*i e.* submitted their reports. **As the fashion is**—as the practice is. **Stand fair for fresh employment**—*i e.* is perfectly fit for new engagements. **Heart**—an expression of amazement. **Will be ignorant of nothing**—*i e.* will pretend to know everything.

Live out—stand apart. **Free from the active torrent**—*i.e.* without taking any active part in politics or diplomacy.

The currents and the passages of things—the movements and trends of political affairs. **The ebbs and flows of states**—the rise and fall or the changes of governments.

I hold myself in no small tie unto my fortunes—*i.e.* I am greatly obliged to my good luck. **Casting me thus luckily upon you**—*i.e.* meeting you by some lucky chance. **Bounty**—kindness or generosity. **Bearing**—conduct. **Raw**—unpolished. **Empty of rules**—without knowing any rules or principles of conduct. **Vulgar grammar**—*i.e.* grammar of the Italian language which used to be considered as a vulgar language (common language). **Cried Italian**—taught the Italian language. **Brave bloods**—*i.e.* persons belonging to aristocratic families. **Hopeful gentry**—promising young men. **Pedants**—scholars who have no practical experience of life and human affairs but who possess only theoretical knowledge derived from books. **Fellows of outside, and mere bark**—*i.e.* persons who are shallow or superficial in their knowledge. **Ingenous race**—frank and artless persons. **Profess it**—*i.e.* claim to possess any very good knowledge of perfect human conduct or refined manners. **In this high kind**—in these important affairs.

Scene II

Mount a bank—to erect a stage. **Dear tongues**—in the precious languages. **Discourse**—talk. **Mountebanks**—quacks or bogus doctors. **Quacksalvers**—*i.e.* inferior class of mountebanks or quacks or bogus physicians. **Venting**—advertising or commending publicly. **Character**—idea of the nature. **Profest favourites**—*i.e.* most popular persons. **Cabinet counsellors**—*i.e.* Ministers of government. **Languaged men**—*i.e.* men who are well-versed in various languages.

Lewd—licentious or deceitful. **Impostors**—bogus persons *i e.* pretenders **Of all terms and shreds**—of all classes and species *i e.* of all sorts. **Beliers**—cheats or traitors. **Vile**—rotten. **Monstrous oaths**—most unbelievable assurances. **Calumnies are answered best by silence**—

gross misrepresentations, can be best disproved by keeping absolutely quiet. **Mounts**—comes upon the stage. **Scoto of Mantua**—a professional actor and leader of an Italian company noted for juggling tricks. **Phantasied**—wrongly reported. **Mount his bank**—stand upon the stage. **Wont to appear**—*i.e.* used to appear. **The Piazza**–*i.e.* St. Mark's Square. **Zanny**—a fool or a jester. **Write ten thousand crowns in bank**—*i e.* collect a good deal of money by one single show of his tricks upon the stage.

Gesture—gait **The state he keeps**—the majesty and dignity he maintains. **In getting up**-*i.e.*, in mounting the bank or the stage. **Portico to the Procuratia**—the residence of the Procurators or financial administrators of St. Mark.

Object the name—talk about the person, *i.e.*, Scoto of Mantua. **Cold on my feet**—*i.e.*, quite poor. **Commodities**—articles, *i.e.*, medicines. **Calumnious** — defamatory. **Impudent**—impertinent. **Detractor**—defamer. **A sforzato to the galleys**–*i.e.*, a galley-slave or a prisoner who is condemned to work in a boat day and night. **Attached**—attributed. **Rabole**—the common crowd. **Ground ciarlitani**—*i.e.*, those quacks who sell their bogus medicines standing on the ground unlike the mountebanks who sell their drugs standing upon some bank or stage.

Do feats of activity—perform some great magical exercise or feat. **Come in lamely**—*i.e.*, cut a sorry figure. **Mouldy**—stale. **Boccacio**—a famous Italian story-writer of the fourteenth century.

Tabarine fabulist—a clown of some Italian company who could tell stories quite easily. **Tedious captivity in the Turks gallies**—*i.e.*, rigorous imprisonment in the boats of the Turks. **Wholesome penance**—reasonable or mild penalty. **Confessors**—*i.e.*, priests to which the guilty persons confess their crimes and sins. **Base pilferies**—mean acts of crime such as thefts, burglaries etc.

Turdy-facy-nasty-paty-lousy-fartical rogues—a term of

abuse used for those bogus quacks who are dirty, mean, vulgar and dull-headed **Poor groat's worth** -*i.e.*, a very paltry amount ; a groat is worth about four pence. **Antimony**—a metallic substance which is used by the quacks for preparing their bogus medicines. **Scartoccios**—small packets. **Kill their twenty a week and play**—kill many patients with their bogus and harmful medicines and yet they go on selling their drugs. **Meagre, starved spirits**—poor persons, *i.e.*, the quacks. **Oppilations**-plugs or lumps for stopping a hole. **Stop to the organs of their minds with earthy oppilations**—stopped the exercise of their brain by means of some thing, *i.e.*, grown stupid. **Shrivelled sallad-eating artisans**—*i e* , the poor labourers who live on vegetables and who naturally grow thin in their body. **Halfperth**—half penny-worth. **Physic**—medicine. **Purge them into another world**—*i.e.*, kill them. **The clamours of the canaglia**—*i.e.*, the noise of the crowd. **His end**—his motive.

Strangers of the Tarra-firma—people coming from the main land of Italy. **Splendidous liberalities**—generous gifts or payments. **Magazine**—store-rooms. **Moscadelli**—some kind of musk preparation. **Cocted**—prepared. **Aniseeds**—some seeds which tone up the liver. **Sparing of your purses**—economic or miserly in spending money. **Abridge the natural course of life**—*i.e.*, to shorten life and die earlier. **His end**—his motive (of earning money).

Humid flux or catarrh—some liquid secretion through the eyes or the nose. **Mutability of air**—*i.e.*, change of wheather. **Ducket**—*i e.*, a ducat or an Italian gold or silver coin. **Unguento**—ointment. **Malignant humours**—evil dispositions of the body due to the predominance of any of the humours such as choler, blood, melancholy, or phlegm. **Unction and fricace**—rubbing with some ointment or oil **Vertigine**—vertigo or giddiness in the head. **Malcaduco**—*i.e.*, epilepsy or the falling sickness. **Tremor-cordia**—palpitation of the heart. **Retired nerves**—contraction of the muscles. **Ill-vapours**—*i.e.*, toxins or injurious gas. **Cramps**—sudden deadening of the muscles.

Stranguary — difficult urination. **Hernia ventosa**—rupture in the hernia. **Iliacapassio**—colic pain. **To.sion of the small guts**—pain in the intestines. **Hypondriaca**—the habit of feeling sad at heart or ill in the body. **The theorick and practick**—the theory and practice. **The Aesculapian Art**—*i.e* , the science of medicine. Aesculapius was the Greek god of medicine. **Extempore**—without any preparation or off-hand. **Zan Fritada**—a famous Italian clown. **Broughton's books**—Hugh Broughton was a learned Puritan of the sixteenth century who was satirised by Jonson in *The Alchemist*. **Alchemy**—formerly, chemistry used to be known as alchemistry by which people tried to find the philosopher's stone in order to convert all baser metals into gold.

Hippocrates or Galen—most famous physicians of ancient Greece. **Murderers of so much paper**—wasters of huge quantities of paper by writing useless books on medicine. **Hurtless taper**—useless candle or oil, *i.e.*, useless labour. **Sassafras**—the bark of some medicinal American tree. **Gaucum**—a medicinal tree of West Indies. **Raymund Lully's great elixir**—Raymund Lully was a famous chemist of the thirteenth century belonging to the Island of Majorca. He is reported to have discovered the philosopher's stone by which one could convert baser metals into gold.

Danish Gonswart—Berthold Schwartz was a Danish monk and also a chemist who invented a gun. **Paracelsus**—he was a Swiss alchemist and physician of the fifteenth century.

Oglio del Scoto—oil prepared by the famous mountebank, Scoto of Mantua. **The patents and privileges**—*i.e.*, the letters of authority or testimonials granted by the princess to Volpone. **Commonwealths of Christendom**—*i.e.*, Christian countries. **Depositions**—statements or certificates. **Signiory of the Sanita**—*i e.*, medical authorities who used to grant permission to the physicians and the mountebanks either to practise or to prepare and sell drugs.

Medicaments—medicines. **Disperse**—distribute. **Experiments receipts**—well-tested prescriptions. **Assayed**—tried. **Furnaces**—ovens containing fire. **Stills, alembecks**—apparatuses for distillation. **Ingredients**—elements or constituents. **Simples**--pure elements as opposed to compounds **Conglutination**—mixing together. **Anatomists**—physicians. **Decoction**—preparation. **All flies in fumo**—everything ends in nothing. **Book them**—*i.e.* write out the secrets of the medicines. **Either in exchange, or for money**—*i.e* purchased the secrets of the medicines with money or secured them by giving away some of the secrets of my own medicines. **Your felt**—your hat, **At the Balloo**—*i. e.* while playing and enjoying time. **At my book**—*i. e.* reading. **Craggy paths**—difficult portions. **Flowery plains**—*i. e.* pleasant fruits of labour, *i. e.* success in the preparation of the various wonderful medicines.

That withal—money is also the motive. **Ampulla**—a small bottle ; a vial also means the same thing. **Montalto**—Cardinal Montalto who became the Pope of Italy. **Fernese**—Allosandro Fernese also became the Pope of Italy. **The great Duke of Tuscany**—Cosimo de Medicine was a Florentine banker, and was a great patron of literature and fine arts. **My gossip**—my god-father or patron. **Mine own offices** my own duties as a mountebank. **Framed my journey**—directed my steps. **Gazettes**—a gazette is a coin worth three farthings. **What monstrous and most painful circumstance**—what great pains are borne and what most unnatural efforts are being made in order to convince the people of the worth of the bogus medicines. **Coil**—disturbance or noise. **Tart of palate**—sensitive in taste. **Quick of ear** *i. e.* capable of hearing the faintest sound. **Moist of hand**—fresh to the touch. **Light of foot**- quick in steps. **Aches**—pains. **For the nones**—for the present. **Coffer**—store. **Moccinigo**—a coin worth nine pence. **By the will cost banner of my front**—in the name of my profession. **Bate**—reduce. **Bagatine**—it is a third part of a farthing. **Contemned**—hated or treated contemptuously. **Deigns**—agrees. **Pistolet**—a Spanish gold coin which is

worth eighteen shillings. **Heroic spark**—a smart or adventurous youth. **The window has prevented you**—the lady from the window has thrown a handkerchief earlier than you could do so, and therefore, she has anticipated you and has prevented you thereby from receiving any token of remembrance from Volpone.

Bounty—gift. **This timely grace**—this ready gift of a handkerchief. **Enamoured**—extremely fond. **Nine thousand volumes .... a word**—several thousands of books would be insufficient to describe the real secret of the magic powder I am offering you. **This pilgrimage of man**—*i. e.*, human life **The whole world ....a private purse**—all the wealth of the world would be insufficient to be equal to the worth of the magic powder. **Venus**—goddess of love and beauty. **Apollo**—sungod or the god of healing. **Cleared her wrinkles**—made the skin smooth. **Helen**—the prettiest woman in the world who happened to be the wife of Menelaus but who was seduced by Paris that led to the Trojan War and brought about the ruin of Troy. **Antiquary**—one who is interested in collecting the most ancient things. **Moeity**—portion. **Sophisticated**—adulterated. **Quintessence**—the purest essence or the essence of the essences. **Virginal jacks**—some musical instruments. **Did they dance like virginal jacks**—*i. e.*, even if the teeth were most shaky. **White as ivory**—extremely white just like the tusk of an elephant.

Scene III.

Spight of the devil—offspring of the devil ; a term of abuse. **My shame**—you (Volpone) are the cause of my personal disgrace because you have been making love openly to my wife. **Signior Flaminio**—he was a renowned actor but later on came to be known for a lover. **Franciscina**—a dancing-girl in the Comedy of Arts. **To make you properties**—to serve as the stage for your love-play. **New-christened**—newly-named. **Pantalonedi Besogniosi**—a Venetian character in the Comedy of Arts ; and it represents a jealous husband who is fooled by his faithless wife,

Some trick of state—some trick employed by the government in order to entrap some persons who are disloayl to the government. **Design on you**—conspiracy against you. **Advices**—informations or intelligences. **Intercepted**—cut off or stolen.

Scene IV.

Cupid—the god of love. **Bolting from her eyes**—love-glances shot from the eyes of the wife of Corvino. **Shot himself into me like a flame**—has excited my love like a fire. **Flings about**—*i. e.*, scatters. **His burning heat**—*i. e.*, the flame of love which fired Cupid, the god of love. **Ambitious fire**—blazing fire. **Vent**—opening or outlet. **The fight is all within me**—the desire for the fulfilment of love is burning within my heart. **My liver melts**—*i. e.*, my heart is consumed by the fire of love. **Soft air**—refreshing bre th of wind. **A heap of cinders**—a pile of charcoal burnt to ashes.

Your release of torment—*i.e.*, relief of your pain. **Aught**—anything. **Within a human compass**—*i.e.*, within human possibilities or as fulfil for as a human being can do. **There spoke my better angel**—When you hold out hopes of the fulfilment of my love I feel that it is the better angel in me speaking. There are two voices in every human being—the good and the evil voices, which are nothing but the two aspects of the moral sense in man. **Devotion**—reward for faithfulness. **Coin me too**—turn me into gold coins. **Crown my longings**—fulfil the desire of my love. **My late disguise**—*i.e.*, the disguise of a mountebank which Volpone put on. **Horn him**—*i.e.*, make a fool of Corvino. **Make me known**—betray my identity. **No jot**—not in the least. **With half the happiness**—with half the success. **Escape your epilogue**—avoid the beating which you have suffered. **Gulled**—fooled. **Distinguished**—*i.e.*, acted so successfully. **Prosper**—succeed. **Applaud my art**—praise my method of doing things.

Scene V

Death of mine honour--ruin of my reputation. **The**

city's fool—*i.e.*, Volpone who looked like a clown or a fool while playing the role of a quack. **Juggling**—deceitful. **Tooth-drawing**—offering to extract teeth. *i.e.*, pretending to be a dentist. **Prating**—boasting. **Mountebank**—quack. **Strained action**—unnatural gestures. **Dole of faces**—various disfigurements of the face. **Drug lecture**—lectures or talks delivered for securing purchasers of bogus medicines. **Itching ears**—inquisitive or curious ears. **Crew**—group. **Noted letchers**—notorious men of loose character. **Leering up**—casting lustful glances. **Satyrs**—Satyr was a wood and god noted for his licentiousness ; hence, it means here men of loose character. **Fan your favours forth**—scatter your smiles, glances, hankerchief etc. all of which are considered as favourable presentations from you. **Hot spectators**—lustful onlookers. **Their call**—their agent or procurer. **Their whistle**—their signal for attracting your attention.

Enamoured — extremely fond of. **Saffron** — orange colour. **Toad-stone**—some kind of stone found in the head of a toad which has the power of curing pain. **Cope-stitch**—a semicircular clock or mantle with its embroideries. **Herse cloth**—the cloth that covers a coffin or a box containing a dead body. **Tilt-feather**—a feather worn on the hat in a slanting manner. **Starched**—stiffened. **The fricace for the mother**—the massage or strong rubbing for making you pregnant. **Mount**—occupy a higher position. **You may be seen down to the foot**—*i.e.*, your whole body may be visible to the onlooker. **Cittern**—a musical instrument resembling a guitar. **Lady vanity**—*i.e.*, a pretender of virtue.

A dealer with the virtuous man—a partner with the mountebank. **Protest myself**—declare myself. **Cuckold**—husband of a faithless woman. **Save your dowry**—keep the money you will earn by selling your body. **I am a Dutchman**—I am a fool. **An Italan**—*i.e.*, a very revengeful person. **Damned**—cursed or punished. **Whore**—prostitute. **As the subject of my justice**—as the object or victim of my

revenge. **Heat of wrath**—fits of anger. **Stung with my dishonour**—wounded in my feelings of honour. **This steel**—this sword. **Goatish eyes**—lustful glances. **Appeased**—pacified. **Move your impatience**—cause your anger. **Entertain a parley**—have a conversation. **A multitude**—a large crowd. **An actor with your handkerchief**—*i e.*, gave signals or offered temptations by dropping your handkerchief just as the heroine in a popular comedy does it. **Kist in the receipt**—received the handkerchief with kisses. **Serve the turn**—serve the purpose. **Stir abroad**—go out of the house. **It shall be less**—your going to the church will now be further restricted.

Thy restraint before was liberty—formerly, whatever restraint was imposed upon you would be no restraint at all as compared with the present restraints *i.e.*, the restraints which I am going to impose upon you. **Decree**—order. **This bawdy light**—this window through which you have been making love to the licentious lovers. **Damned up**—sealed up. **Set thy desperate foot**—*i.e.*, tread most daringly. **More hell**—worse or more painful punishment. **More wild remorseless rage**—more brutal acts of anger, without any regret for such cruel action. **Conjurer**—magician. **Heedless**—carelessly. **His circle's safety**—the safety of the magic circle of the magician who cannot be injured any way by the devil if he stays within such a circle. **Devil was laid**—the devil was overpowered.

Keep thee backwards—keep you in the back part of the house so that you may not be easily visible to the onlookers. **Thy prospect all be backwards**—*i.e.*, you will see outside things only through the back part of the house. **But backwards**—only under cover of darkness. **It is your own**—it is your own nature. **Being too open**—being too easy to be tempted. **Contain**—confine. **Subtle nostrils**—unduly sensitive nose for discovering the men of loose character.

Sweet room—*i.e.*, healthy atmosphere free from the temptations. **Snuff the air**—smell (feel) the temptations.

Rank and sweaty—foul and dirty, *i. e.*, of loose character. **Pain of they life**—*i. e.*, penalty of losing your life. **Make thee an anatomy**—*i. e.*, cut you to pieces.

Dissect—cut to pieces. **Lead a lecture**—*i.e.*, give a lecture on morals. **To the city**—to all the people of the city.

Scene VI

Some good to help the bad—some good news (death of Volpone) to compensate the bad news about the loose character of my wife. **Bewitched**—influenced by evil spirits. **My crosses meet to vex me**—my misfortunes come in a crowd to annoy me. **But for the law**—but for the fear of the penalties of law. **That virtue**—*i.e.*, the property of restoring life or energy. **Fidling**—playing on a fidle. **Osteria**—an inn. **Tumbling whore**—drunken prostitute. **Ingredients**—elements. **Gall**—bile. **Marrow**—fatty substance inside bones. **Sod**—boiled. **Earwigs**—a kind of crawling insect that curls up at the very touch.

Pounded—powdered. **Caterpillars**—insects. **Capon**—a kind of fish or a castrated cock. **Spittle**—saliva. **To a dram**—*i. e.*, to the minutest quantity. **The fricace**—the massage or rubbing. **Box on that fricace**—cursed be that massage. **More officious and flattering of his health**—more inquisitive and interested in Volpone's health.

Extreme fees—extremely high fees for the physicians. **Cataplasm**—plaster. **Flayed**—skin taken off. **Clapped**—chained. **Lusty**—full of sexual desire *i. e.* passionate. **Full of juice**—*i. e.*, most youthful. **To this service**—*i. e.* for securing a young passionate and juicy woman. **Cross your ends**—create obstacles in the way of your ambition. **Delate**—inform against or give an unfavourable report. **My slackness**—my laziness in securing a young woman. **Work me out of his opinion**—create a bad impression. **Ventures**—*i. e.*, gifts. **Frustrate**—defeated or baffled.

Striving—trying the utmost. **Villainous fortune**—treacheous fate. **Courtesan**—prostitute. **Subtle**—cunning. **Full of art**--tricky. **Doting and flexible**—foolish and plorable. **Light on**—discover **Quean**—prostitute. **Made unto it**—trained for the purpose. **Odso**—by God so. **Nought**—nothing. **Warm his blood**—excite his passion or sex desire. **But a fever**—except fever. **Incantation**—supernatural charm. **Raise his spirit**—make him sexually hungry. **A long forgetfulness**—a long importency. **That part**—*i.e.*, sex organ. **This luck**—*i. e.*, lending one's daughter or wife.

The thing in itself is nothing—this lending of one's daughter or wife to an impotent old man is not at all a harmful thing so far the wife or the daughter is concerned because the man cannot hold any sexual intercourse with any of the two. **Command my blood and my affections**—induce my own wife. **All one**—the same. **'Slight**—an oath. **Which is nothing**—*i.e.*, the doctor's advice is not worth anything. **So deeply in**—so much involved in the matter. **Covetous wretch** — greedy creature *i. e.*, the doctor. **The party you vot of**—the young woman you talked of. **Motioned**—suggested. **Make your count**—judge for yourself. **Cut all their throats**—defeated all your rivals. **Directly taking a possession**—as good as actually being the possessor of Volpone's. **Let him go**—let him die. **Throttled**—strangled. **Scrupulous doubts**—hesitations and fears. **A plague on it**—let my hesitations and fears be cursed. **My conscience fools my wit**—my moral sense misleads my intelligence. **Free motion**—free will. **Warrant**—assure. **Possess him**—influence his mind. **Starved clients**—poor candidates for the wealth of Volpone. **Vanished all**—all the clients will be driven out *i e.*, deprived of the right of succession to Volpone's property. **Ripen for your good** — be ready for your success.

Scene VII

Blubbering—sobbing or weeping. **Thoughtest me in earnest**—took my words seriously. **By this light**—by the sun. (an Oath). **Try thee**—test you. **Lightness of the occasion**—non-serious manner of the talk. **Confirmed**

thee—convinced you. **Unprofitable humour**—useless whim. **Do against all the watches**—do things (make illicit love) in spite of the strictest watch. **Fiercest spies**—strictest watch. **Tamed with gold**—silenced with money.

Attire—dress. **Thy best looks**—your best appearance. **Solemn feast**—grand feast *i.e.* a banquet. **Jealousy**—suspicion.

ACT III (Scene I)

Prosperous parts—successful role. **Spring and burgeon**—sprout and blossom *i. e.*. come out so successful. **Whimsy**—excitement of joy. **Wanton**—sportive. **Skip out of my skin**—change my skin *i. e.*, change my mood suddenly. **Subtle-snake**—as agile or quick like a snake. **Limber**—quick in movement or in changing the mood. **Pour parasite**—*i.e.*, Mosca who is a dependent upon Volpone and who is living at the expense of his master.

From above—from heaven. **Clods and clodpoles**—*i. e.*, fools and idiots. **The mystery**—the profession of a parasite. **A science**—a secretor or difficult thing. **Liberally professed**—universally practised. **Is little else**—is anything less than parasites. **Bare town-art**—a mere city parasite. **Mould tales for men's ears**—invent stories to please their master.

To bait their sense—to please the ear. **Kitchen invention**—some recipes for preparing certain dishes. **Stale receipts**—old formulas for certain dishes of food. **The groin**—the genitales or sexorgan. **Court dog-tricks**—clever ways of the courtiers to please others *i e.*, courteous and polite manners. **Fawn and fleer**—flatter and bow. **Make their revenue**—earn their living. **Out of legs and faces**—*i. e.* by kneeling and smiling or by slavish manners. **Echo my lord**—follows closely the master. **Lick away a moth**—remove the insect from the coat *i. e.*, to do some menial service.

Fine elegant rascal—a polished and respectable parasite. **That can rise and stoop**—one who can kneel down and get up *i. e.*, one who can do all sorts of contradictory things. **Like an arrow**—just as an arrow can be bent as

well as made erect or straight. **Nombly**—swiftly and quietly **Turn short**—*i e.*, change the direction all of a sudden. **All at once**—all at the same time. **Present to any humour**—suitable to any mood. **All occasion**—all situations. **Change a visor**—change looks in the face. **Had the art born with him**—*i. e.*, a born parasite, and not a made parasite. **Toils not to learn it**—does not labour in order to acquire the art of of being a parasite. **Such sparks**—persons possessing such inborn qualities. **Zanis**—subordinates or assistants or not genuine parasites.

Scene II.

Bonnd to seek—went to find out. **Happily met**—luckily met. **Know thy way**—see your own way instead of seeking me **That cannot be by thee**—you cannot be seeking me. **Loth**—unwilling. **Interchanges discourse**—*i.e.*, have a talk. **Leave**—permission. **Baseness**—meanness. **Sloth**—laziness. **Sufficient argument**—good reason. **Imputations**—attributes or qualites. **Stuck on virtue**—attributed to the good people. **Sentence**—opinion. **Righteous**--correct or just. **Proceed in censure**—go to accuse. **St. Mark**—he was the patron saint of Venice. **Inhuman**—cruel. **The sign of soft and good**—the mark of a loving and innocent heart. **Swayed by strong necessity**—compelled by great necessity **Careful bread**—bread earned with great care and labour. **Obsequy**—servility or slavish and mean manners. **Raiment**—garment or dress.

Mere observance—*i.e.*, the practice of a parasite. **Free fortune**—great wealth or natural (inborn), good luck. **Base offices**—mean jobs. **Rending friends as under**—separating two friends from each other *i.e.* turning them into enemies to each other. **Dividing families**—creating enmities amongst the members of a family. **Betraying counsels**—disclosing secrets treacherously. **Fain to spin**—willing to weave. **Mining men**—secretly injuring people. **Trained their credulity with perjuries**—made them believe in false evidence. **Corrupted chastity**—degraded virtuous women. **Tender ease**—easy comfort. **Prove**—follow. **Rugged**—rough or difficult. **Redeem**—improve.

Present estimation—present opinion. **In all hope of**

goodness--in all conscience or without any hope of salvation. **Personated passion**—artificial or insincere emotion. **Mistake thy nature** — misunderstand your character. **Speak out your business**—tell me what you want.

Make a main offence in manners—commit a great fault conduct. **Is in purpose**—is bent upon. **Disinherit you**—deprive you of the right of owning your father's property after his death. **Thrust you forth**—kick you out. **A mere stranger to his blood**—a bastard. **Engageth me**—concerns me. **The general state of goodness and true virtue**—*i.e.*, average good qualities. **To abound in you**—to be found in your character. **For which mere respect**—out of mere respect for your good nature.

Lost thee much of the late trust with me—I have lost much of the confidence or trust in you which you recently created in me. **Lend it any thought**—believe it in the least. **Becomes your piety**—is worthy of your good nature. **Monstrous**—hideous or ugly. **Abhorred**—hateful. **Shall be a witness of the deed**—*i.e.*, hear about the deed (will) of disinheritance. **Bastard**—illegitimate child. **Profest**—declared. **The common issue of the earth**—*i.e.*, the child who belongs to nobody. **Amazed**—very greatly surprised. **Draw your just sword**—draw your sword for fighting an honest cause. **Score your vengeance**—fulfil your revenge. **My front and face**—my face and front body. **You have too much wrong**—too much injustice has been done to you. **Weeps blood**—weeps most bitterly. **Anguish**—grief or extreme sorrow.

Scene III

Eunuch—a person who has neither the male nor the female sex-organ *i.e.*, a neuter gender. **Knows delicates**—declared favourites. **Precedency**—superiority. **Set you both to school**—teach you both. **He is little**—he is short in size or small in dimension. **Pretty little**—very small. **Pretty ape**—a ridiculous monkey. **Ridiculous fashion**—foolish or laughable manner. **Feat body**—slim or nimble body. **One of your bulks**—a little portion of the large quantity of food. **The mother of laughter**—the cause of

laughter. **Come after**—come next in importance. **Beholding**—indebted. **Cupid**—god of love. **Fair return**—*i.e.*, arrival—of Celia, a beautiful woman. **Would be**—*i.e.*, Lady Politick Would-be. **Torment**—torture. **Squire her in**—conduct her into my room. **Dwell here for ever**—wait here as long as possible. **My fit were past**—I wish that I had no longer to pretend sickness—**A second hell too**—the fit brought on by the Lady Politick Would be. **Lothing this**—hating this woman *i.e.*, Lady Politick Would-be. **Expel my appetite to the other**—drive away my liking for Celia. **Threats me what I am to suffer**—threatens me with the prospect of the pain which I am going to suffer when Lady Politick Would be will appear before me.

Scene IV

Signify—tell. **Band**—collar. **Petulant**—irritating.the **fever**—*i.e.* the voice of Lady Politick which causes the greatest annoyance to Volpone. **O for a charm**—I wish, I could get some magic charm. **To fright it hence**—to scare away Lady Politick from my presence (Volpone's presence). **Curl**—curl of hair. **You have not washed your eyes** yet *i.e.*, you cannot see things clearly because there is still some sleepiness ganging in your eyes, otherwise you would have set right my curls of hair.

Do they not stand even in your head ?—are not your eyes set in your head ? Are they set somewhere in your body that you cannot see things clearly ? **Your fellow**—your companion or fellow-attendant. **Her nose is** red—she is angry **Tire**—head-dress or some kind of ornament for ladies' hair. **Forsooth**—surely. **Sticks out**—stands erect. **Dear sight**—pretty eyes (said ironically). **Bird eyed**—partly blind ; frightened. **Mend it**—put the hair in its proper place. **Muse**—think. **Preached these** things—talked about the secrets of dressing. **The principles**—the ways of dressing. **Argued all the grounds**—explained the reasons. **Disputed every** tness—found faults with every manner of dressing. **Calfied you to counsel**—invited you to attend the meeting. **Frequent dressings**—many occasions dressing. **More carefully than of your** fame or **honour**—you have been careful more about your dress than about your reputation (as a woman of character)

Ample dowry—plenty of money to be earned on marriage. Here it means, a source of great income. **Your return**—your return to England. **Imputation**—accusation. **Go your ways**—go wherever you like. **Fucus**—some stuff for making up one's appearance ; not mere cosmetics. **The strom**—*i.e.*. Lady Politick, who is a source of disturbance to Volpone. **A strange fury**—Furies are agents of Fate, and here Lady Politick is regarded as one of the Furies. **Tempest**—storm. **Cleave**—rend. **Asunder**—apart.

Out on my fate—cursed be my fate. **The occasion**—the reason or the excuse. **Torment**—torture. **The golden mediocrity**—the golden mean. **Passion of the heart**—palpitation of the heart. **Seed Pearl**—small pearl. **Syrup**—jurice. **Tincture**—o touch *i.e*, a little ; or essence. **Coral**—a kind of stone made out of the gum of certain insects grown under the sea. **Citron-pills**—tablets made out of the extract of the fruit of lemon. **Elicampane**—a kind of plant the root of which is used as a stimulant. **Myroblanes**—a medicinal plant used for curing melancholy.

Taken a grass-hopper by the wing—*i.e.*, given the cause of creating the greatest disturbance. The grass-hopper stands here for Lady Politick. **Amber**—a yellow translucent fossil resin used for oranaments etc. **Muscadel**—a rich sweet wine, **Saffron**—part of the flower of a plant used as orange colouring matter. **Dram**—a little quantity. **Clove**—nail-shaped dried but of tropical tree used as flavouring ; or one sector of a bulb of garlic. **Musk**—a kind of plant with musky smell ; or a substance secreted by a species of male deer used generally as basis of perfume and also for curing heart-palpitation. **Mint**—an aromatic (sweet-smelling) kitchen herb. **Bugloss**—a a plant cultivated for a red dye (colour).

She is in again—she has again started talking and creating disturbance for me. **Feigned**—pretended. **I have one**—I have got one real (not pretended disease. **Scarlet cloth**—used for the treatment of small pox. **Flood of words**—too many words. **Torrent**—a regular stream **Poultice**—some kind of pack or plaster. **Physic**—

medical science. **Letters and arts**—literature and subjects in arts. **Discourse**—talk or hold conversation. **Rapture**—joy. **Consent**—a word used by Plato in the sense of agreement or harmony. **Our sex's chief ornament**—the main source of attraction of women. **Highest female grace is silence**—the greatest mark of beauty on the part of a woman is not to talk. **Petrarch, Tasso, Dante, Guarini, Ariosto, Aretine, Cleco dl Hadria**—all were Italian poets of great repute.

Is everything a cause to my destruction—does anything and everyting provoke Lady Politick to start talking and boring me (making me miserable)?

Two or three of them about me—two or three of the great Italian poets in my book-shelf. **He eternal tongue**—Lady Politick's tongue always busy talking something or other. **Pastor Fido**—work of Guarini.

Profess obstinate silence—declare or maintain silence with firm determination, **Happy in the Italian**—good in reading and writing the Italian language. **Deign**—condescend. **Steal out**—*i.e.*, borrow without acknowledgment. **Montaigne**—a French essayist. **Facile a vein**—flexible style. **Catching the court-ear**—attracting the attention of the courtiers who are supposed to have a very artistic taste refined taste). **Petrarch**—an Italian poet who is well-known for his sonnets.

In days of sonnetting—in days when the sonnet was popular. **Trusted them with much**—depended much on the sonnet for the expression of his love. **Dante**—an Italian poet whose Divina Comedia is quite well-known. **A desperate wit**—an extraordinary intellect ; or an unusually humorous soul. **Obscene**—vulgar. Sixteen of Aretine sonnets were used for obscene (vulgar) designs by Glulio Romano, an Italian artist.

Perturbed—disturbed. **Our philosophy**—our visdom. **Passions**—lower instincts or baser desires of body and the mind. **Rebel**—revolt or declare to go out of control. **Encounter them with reason**—balance and control the baser instincts with the superior power of reason. **Divert them**—direct the lower instincts through some other

channel. **Giving scope**—giving indulgence. **Humour of lesser danger**—impulse or desire which is less harmful. **Politic bodies**—public bodies or groups of people.

Overwhelm the judgment—influence the power of reason. **Cloud the understanding**—confuse the power of judging things. **Too much settling and fixing**—*i.e.*, taking a very rigid and obstinate attitude towards anything. **Subsiding** — concentrating. **Incorporating** — absorbing. **Outward things**—material things which are not mental. **That part**—*i.e.*, the mind. **Faeces**—sediments or deposits or collections. **Stop the organs**—do not allow the various sense organs to function. **Plato** — a great Roman philosopher. **Assassinate our knowledge**—put an end to the ways of acquiring or increasing knowledge. **The spirit of patience**—*i.e.*, the guardian-angel or the controlling power of patience. **More a days**—more frequently these days. **Lusty**—healthy.

One sole men—only one man. **Lie you**—lie in bed for your sake. **Rapt**—most attentive. **Quite from the purpose**—quite irrelevantly. **Discourse**—converse. **An't be**—if it be. **Coaetanei**—of the same age.

Scene V.

Redemption—salvation. **This my furture**—*i.e.*, Lady Politick who is the source of all kinds of pain to me by her continual talking. **The everlasting voice**—the most talkative woman who never stops her tongue.—**Pestilence**—outbreak of some epidemic such as plague, pox or cholera. **In that perpetual motion**—*i.e.*, continually talking.

The cock-pit—the cock-fight. **Comes not near it**—is not noisy as Lady Politick. **Steamed like a bath**—*i,e.* produced a very loud hissing sound. **A lawyer could not have been heard**—a lawayer while arguing a case in a court of law is the loudest but he also cannot compare with Lady Politick in her loud tongue.

A hail of words—a shower of words. **Let fall**—spoken. **Rid her hence**—remove her from here. **For hell's sake**—for

the sake of the devil. **Presented**—presented any gift. **I will take her absence upon any price**—I want to get rid of her presence at any cost. **Cape**—a short sleeveless cloack. **Your knight**—your husband. **Apprehend**—discover. **Condola**—a pleasure boat most popular in Venice. **Courtesan**—prostitute. **Believe your eyes**—believe what you see with your own eyes. **It would take**—my words would be catching to her (Lady Politick).

Those that use themselves most license—those who are themselves loose in character. **Jealous**—suspicious. **Quick fiction**—quick invention of a lie (a fictitious story). **My hopes**—my hope of getting Celia. **Paroxysm**—a fit. **The Railto**—the place where the Exchange of Venice is situated **Promise timely fruit**—assure a good result in proper time. **Stay but the maturing**—wait for the result.

My spirits are returned—I am becoming healthier and stronger. **Wanton gamester**—reckless card-player. **Primero**—a card game in which four cards are given to four players, each card having thrice its ordinary value. **Not go less**—to take not a small sum. **Draw**—pluck a card from the pack. **Encounter**—contest in card play or in love.

Scene VI.

Closet—room. **Here concealed**—being hidden in this room. **This a truth**—that my father has really decided to disinherit me is not a thing I am prepared to believe.

Scene VII.

Death on me—I am ruined. **They prevent us**—the rival candidates get the advantage over us. **For his horns**—for being the husband of a faithless wife *i. e.* a cuckold. **Courtier**—a member of the royal family or of the court of the king. **Ply it so**—work so much in haste. **For a place**—for a position in the court *i. e.* for the nobility. **Wherefore**—why. **Walk the while**—move up and down in the meantime. **Entertain the time**—to pass the time. **I do doubt this fellow**—I suspect this man (Mosca). **Far enough**—sufficiently away. **Starting back**—going back. **Decreed**—ordered. **Move it afore**—propose it before. **Shifts**—artifices. **Deny me**—deprive me of the chance of being the

successor to the property of Volpone. **Beseech**—earnestly request. **Affect not these strange trials**—do not try to test my character in this strange manner (by pushing me into the room of an old man). **The heir of darkness**—the captive in a dark cell or room.

Please your fears, if not your trust—satisfy your suspicion but not your faith. **No much humour**—no such thought or intention. **A wife**—i.e. a partner in the bed (for sexual intercourse). **O heaven**—what a shocking thing. **Thetrain**—the trick for trying my chastity. **Have set down**—prescribed or advised for Volpone's cure. **Engagements**—undertakings **Means**—resources or financial capacity. **My recovery**—i. e. compensation of my gifts to Volpone. **Respect my venture**—have regards for my enterprise (*i.e.* to get all the property of Volpone). **Before your honour** ?—sacrificing your reputation as the husband of a chaste wife ?

Honour but, a breath—do you talk of honour which is all a humbug and which is short-lived like breath. **Awe**—frighten. **My gold**—here it means chastity. **The worse for touching**—becomes worse by using. **Clothes for being looked on**—clothes do not get soiled by merely staring at them. **My gold the worse for touching**—my honour as the husband of a faithful wife cannot be spoiled by merely lending her to others for their use or sexual enjoyment just as real gold cannot be any way spoilt by merely touching it or using it.

Decrepit—extremely old and important. **Sinew**—muscle or energy in the sex organ. **His meat**—his meals. **With other's fingers**—not with one's own fingers or independently. **Gape**—open the mouth. **Scald**—burn. **What spirit**—what a strange idea or notion. **Entered him**—taken hold of his mind. **Jig**—farce. **Cry it on the Piazza**—declare it publicly. Piazza is the chief market place in Venice. **He that cannot speak it**—*i.e.* Volpone who cannot move out of his bed. **This fellow**—*i.e.* Mosca. **Whose lips are in my pocket**—who cannot speak out anything because his future (prospects) lies in my hand. **Save yourself**—except yourself. **Are heaven and saints then nothing** ?—do you mean to say that angels and gods in heaven cannot see the act (i e. my sexual intercourse with Volpone).

Jealous still—suspicious always. **Emulate**—imitate. **They burn with**—the gods and the saints express their hatred. **Every sin**—every form of evil deed whether of adultery or anything else. **Grant you**—agree with you. **Hot Tuscan blood**—passionate Italianperson. **Read Aretine**—read the obscene sonnets of Aretine. **Conned**—read carefuly or got by heart. **All his prints**—all the works of Aretine. **Quirk**—method or trick. **Lust's labyrinth**—ways of sexual enjoyment. **Professed**—declared or known. **Critic in lechery**—expert in sexual indulgence. **Applaud**—praise. **Mere charity for physic**—mere social service for the sake of restoring health and energy to Volpone. **An honest polity**—a true polity. **To assure mine own**—to make sure of my fortune.

Suffer such a change—have such a change (from an accuser of my chastity to a supporter of my inchastity). **My tickling**—i.e. the source of my pleasant excitement (sexual). **By that light**—in the name of the sun (a kind of oath). **Consultation**—advice of the physicians. **Prostitute** to sell the body. **Uninterested**—without being requested. **Fervent instance**—ardent or enthusiastic example. **Proper wife**—chaste wife. **Only of price**—the only worthwhile. **Will urged**—well said. **Vain labour**—useless effort.

Right against heaven—to struggle against bad luck or against the wishes of God. **Applying fire to stone**—offering a young juicy woman for the recovery of health and energy to an old man who is as good as dead.

Making a dead leaf grow again—making the dead alive again or trying to recover health and energy which have been for ever ruined or lost. **Take his wishes gently**—accept the offer of his wife thankfully. **Will him to pray for me**—ask him to pray to God for restoring my health and energy **Use his fortune with reverence**—use his wealth carefully or economically or for some noble purpose.

Heart of my father—in the name of the life of my father. **Persist thus**—continue refusing to submit yourself. **It is nothing**—this surrender of yourself is not at all a serious or guilty affair. **By this hand**—in the name of my hand (a kind of oath). **Strumpet**—prostitute. **Rip up**—

tear up. **Unto thine ears**—up to the end of your ears. **Slit**—cut. **Rochet**—a kind of fish. **Loth**—disgusted.

Devising some monstrous crime—inventing some hateful crime. **Capital letters**—big or old alphabets. **Ease into thy flesh**—mark deeply on your body. **Aqua fortis**—nitric acid. **Corsives**—some acid which leaves a deep mark. **Incensed**—inflamed or kindled. **Martyr**—victim. **Attires**—fine clothes or garments. **At my suit**—on my request. **Thirst my undoing**—want my ruin.

She has watched her time—she has taken advantage of the situation. **Ods precious**—God's precious (a kind of oath). **Scurvy**—nasty. **An arrant locust**—a downright thief. **Whore**—prostitute. **Crocodile**—a hypocrite. **Bid them flow**—i.e. shed the tears. **Would my life would serve to satisfy**—I wish, I could sacrifice my life in order to fulfill the wish of my husband but not to surrender my chastity to Volpone.

S'death—God's death (a kind of death). **It were somewhat**—it would have been some kind of satisfaction. **Spightfully**—scornfully or defying my authority. **Modesty**—shyness. **Quit**—leave. **More coming**—more willing to submit herself. **Dare undertake for her**—take up the responsibility on her behalf.

Redeem all—compensate everything or save everybody. **Esteem yourself as lost**—regard yourself as completely ruined. **Whither**—where. **Is shame fled human breast?**—has man lost all his sense of decency? **With such ease**—*i. e.* with no repentance. **Put off your honours**—*i.e.* sacrifice virtues. **A cause of life**—a source of reputation and everything in life. **Placed beneath the basest circumstance**—below the meanest thing. **Modesty an exile made for money**—chastity is sacrificed for the sake of earning wealth.

Earth-fed minds—persons with a low mind or narrow outlook. **The true heaven of love**—the real blessings (pleasures) of love. **His part of paradise**—his greatest blessing or source of happiness. **Ready money**—immediate gain. **Cope-man**—dealer or businessman.

Mazed—amazed or surprised. **Revived**—restored to

energy. **Applaud**—praise. **Beauty's miracle**—the wonderful effect of beauty. **Thy great work**—the effect of your beauty and youth. **Sundry times**—many a time. **Raised me**—restored me to energy. **In several shapes**—in various forms. **My practice**—my profession of a mountebank. **In varying figures**—in various shapes *i. e.* in different guises **Contented**—competed. **The blue Proteus**—Prote he sea-god, and the colour of the sea is always b . **The horned flood**—a river-god, named, Achelus, th Oceanus, who had a fight with Hercules, the strongest man of Greece, for winning the love of Deianeira and in the fight, he lost one of horns. Acheleus used to have three shapes—of a bull, a serpent, and a man with an ox's head.

Fly me not—do not try to avoid me or run away from me. **False imagination**—wrong thinking. **Bed-rid**—lying on stantly in the bed. **I am so**—I am an invalid or a crippled person *i. e.* unfit for enjoying a young woman. **As hot**—quite passionate. **As high**—very highly excited. **Jovial plight**—jolly mood. **Celebrated scene**—a well-known entertainment in which the Dogs and the Senators of Venice arranged to welcome Henry of Valois, who afterwards became the famous Henry III of France on the death of his brother Charles IX. This incident took place when Henry was on his way to France to be crowned King.

Great Valois—he became Henry III of France, Duke of Anjou and King of Poland. **Artinus**—a young man of great beauty who was a favourite of the Emperor Harian. **Graceful gesture**—attractive movement of the limbs. **Note**—notes of singing. **Footing**—manner of walking. **Let us prove**—let us experience. **He**—God or Fate. **Our good-will sever**—will deprive us of our pleasure. **His gifts**—the gifts of God *i. e.* beauty and youth. **This light**—this opportunity. **Perpetual night**—continuous darkness or uninterrupted sorrow due to the loss of pleasure. **Defer**—postpone or put off. **Rumour**—reputation. **Toys**—trifling or worthless things. **Delude the eyes**—deceive the eyes. **Household spies**—the inmates of the house who may work as spies or agents to watch our doings. **His easier ears**—the ears of your husband which can be more easily

deceived. **Removed**—misled or deceived. **Will**—trick. **Beguile**—deceive. **Love's fruits to steal**—to enjoy illicit love. **The sweet thefts**—*i. e.* stolen or illicit love which is most enjoyable. **Reveal**—disclose. **To be taken**—to be caught read-handed *i. e* while enjoying illicit love. **To be seen**—to be observed while enjoying illicit love. **These have crimes accounted been**—either to disclose the secret of love-making or to be detected or observed by others while enjoying unlawful love is considered as a crime in the eye of law.

Serene—poisonous dew or mist. **Blast**—destory. **Dire lightning**—dreadful or destructive thunder. **Offending face**—a face which attracts people to commit crimes of love. **Droops**—sinks or feels discouraged. **Base husband**—poor or low-minded husband. Use **thy fortune**—make use of the good opportunity for winning the heart of a wealthy person like Volpone by allowing him to enjoy your beauty and youth. **With secrecy**—*i. e.* openly before others. **Behold**—see. **Queen of**—owner of. **Not in expectation**—not to wait for the future to be the owner of Volpone's wealth. **As I feed others**—like my dependents. **Possessed and crowned**—*i. e.* in actual possession or immediate owner or possessor of the wealth and property of Volpone. **A rope of pearls**—a string of pearls. **More orient**—much brighter and costlier. The pearls of the East are regarded as much costlier and brighter than those of the West.

The brave Egyptian queen—the beautiful queen of Egypt *i. e.* Cleopatra. **Caroused**—drank along with wine. **Dissolve and drink them**—melt the pearls in the wine and drink the wine. This sort of drink is supposed to be most invigorating for sexual enjoyments.

Carbuncle—a red-coloured precious stone. **Put out both the eyes of St. Mark**—*i. e.* shine brighter than the eyes of St. Mark. In the statue of St. Mark two carbuncles actually were used for making the two eyes of the saint. **Would have bought Lollia Paulina**—would have excelled the price of the jewels which Lollia Paulina, wife of Emperor Caligula used to wear. **In like star-light**—in similar bright-

ness of the stars. **The spoils of provinces**—the loot or plunder of the subordinate states. **To purchase them again**—*i. e.* which is worth the price (value) of all the jewels and precious stones mentioned so far.

This whole state—the entire Venetain State which was the richest state in Europe in ancient days. **Private patrimony**—private property which is inherited from parents. **Is nothing**—*i. e.* has no worth. **The phoenix**—a kind of Arabian bird which used to exist thousands of years ago and which lived for five hundred years but which burnt itself to ashes, and later on revived itself. This is, of course, a mythical or fabulous bird which exists only in the mind of the poet and the artists.

Nature lost her kind—*i e.* the entire species of the phoenix has now become totally extinct just like many other ancient birds and animals. **She were our dish**—the phoenix would have served us a good food. **Affected with such delights**—sensitive or liable or prone to such enjoyments. **Whose innocence**—whose chastity **Think wealthy**—regard as precious like wealth. **Worth the enjoying**—worth preserving. **Taken with**—tempted with. **Sensual baits**—temptations relating to any kind of bodily enjoyment.

It is the beggar's virtue—it is only the poor people who talk of conscience, and take pride in conscience. **Spirit of roses**—essence of roses. **Violet**—a kind of flower. **Unicorn**—a kind of animal which resembles a horse but which has a horn on its forehead. **Panther**—leopard. **Cretan**—produced in the isle of Crete. **Amber**—a yellow translucent fossil resin used for ornaments. **My roof**—the crown of my head **Whirl round**—move in a circle. **Vertigo**—a feeding of giddiness or reeling sensation. **Eunuch**—a person belonging to the neuter gender *i. e.* one is neither male nor female. **Make up the antic**—play the part of dancing.

In Ovid's tales—the tales in verse of Ovid, the Roman poet who relates the love-affairs of the gods and the goddesses in his *Metamorphoses*. **Europa**—she was the daughter of Agenor, King of Phoenicia. Jove was in love with her. **Changed shapes**—various shapes of animals,

birds, trees in which the gods and the goddessess made love to each other so that nobody could come to know of their love-making. **Erycine**—her other name is Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. She was the wife of Vulcan but she carried on secretly with Mars, the god of war Vulcan was the blacksmith of the god of war.

Quite run through—exhausted the list of the various tales of the gods and the goddessess. **Attired**—dressed. **Sprightly dame**—lovely and spirited. **Tuscan**—Italian. **Persian Sophy's wife**—the wife of the Persian Emperor. **The grand signior's mistress**—the wife of the Sultan of Turkey. **Artful courtesans**—cunning prostitutes. **Quick Negro**—passionate Negro. **Cold Russian**—a Russian who is not passionate. **Transfuse**—concentrate. **Wandering souls**—scattered mints. **At our lips**—*i.e.* with kisses. **Score up sums of pleasure**—count the various kinds of pleasure enjoyed. **The curious**—those who are unduly curious to know the enjoyments of others. **Tell them**—count the pleasures. **As they flow**—when the enjoyments come. **The envious**—those who are jealous of the enjoyments of others **Be pined**—be sad at heart because of the unfulfilment of the desires.

Pierced—made capable of hearing. **Touched**—moved to sympathy. **Sounds man about you**—indicates or shows any quality of a human being. **Touch of holy saints or heaven**—the slightest virtue of kindness or nobleness just as the saints or the gods possess. **Do me the grace**—do me the favour. **Bountiful**—kind enough. **Ill betrayed**—treacherously deceived. **Whose shame I would forget it were**—whose shameful behaviour I should like to forget but which is impossible to forget. **Deign me neither of these graces**—grant me none of the favours such as killing me in fits of anger or permitting me to go away. **It is a vice comes nearer manliness**—anger is a virtue because it is a mark of courage sometimes but lust or passion (sexual desire) is a definite vice. **Punish that unhappy crime of nature** punish or destroy my beauty which is an unfortunate blessing of Nature to me because it tempts persons to rob me of my chastity.

Flay—take off the skin. **Ointments**—some kind of medicine in the form of a paste. **Seducing your blood**—exciting your sexual desire. **This rebellion**—this height of excitement. **Eating leprosy**—a kind of skin disease that slowly eats away the flesh **Marrow**—the fatty substance inside the bones. **Disfavour me**—disfigure my face. **Save in my honour**—except in my honour. **Pay down a thousand hourly vows**—make pledges to God thousand times in your favour. **Report**—talk publicly. **Think you virtuous**—regard you a man of character.

Frozen and impotent—*i. e.* not in the least passionate or capable of enjoying a young woman. **Report me**—declare me. **Nestor's hernia**—Nestor was an old hero of the Trojan War, he suffered from hernia or rupture of the abdominal socket through which the intestines pass into the scrotum, and as such, it produces excessive pain. One who suffers from hernia cannot enjoy a woman properly. **Degenerate**—become degraded. **Abuse my nation**—insult the Italian nation which is notorious for its licentiousness.

To play with opportunity thus long—not to take the opportunity of enjoying Celia when so much time has been allowed to him (Volpone). **Done the act**—committed the sexual outrage on Celia by forcing her to have sexual intercourse with Volpone. **Parleyed**—talked of a compromise (i.e. sexual intercourse by mutual consent).

Forbear—stop. **Foul ravisher**—wicked molester of a woman's chastity. **Libidinous swine**—lustful pig. **The forced lady**—the lady who is being forced to submit to a sexual intercourse. **Imposter**—traitor. **Loth**—unwilling. **Snatch thy punishment out of the band of justice**—save you from the penalties of law by killing you immediately. **The timely sacrifice of vengeance**—*i. e.* the victim of punishment. **This altar**—this lady *i. e.* Celia. **This dross**—this rubbish *i. e.* the jewels and other precious things. **Thy idol**—the thing that you worship *i. e.* the wealth you possess.

Quit—leave. **The den of villainy**—the hot-bed of wickedness and treachery. **Nought**—nothing **A guard**—a protector (Bonario). **His just reward**—his proper punishment.

Unmasked—exposed. **Unspirited**—disheartened. **Betrayed to beggary**—led treacherously to extreme poverty. **Infamy**—bad name.

Scene VIII.

Most wretched shame of men—most miserable victim of shame and disgrace among mankind. **To beat out my unlucky brains**—i.e. to kill myself. **Well driven sword**—i.e. a sword hitting its mark properly. **Cleft me down unto the navel**—i e. divided my body into two parts horizontally from the head to the navel. **Desperately engaged**—badly involved. **Woe on thy fortune**—curse upon your bad luck. **My follies**—my foolish blunders **Hearkened**—listened to. **Expiated the mischance**—make an ends for the unlucky accident. **Requite**—reward **Die like Romans**—commit suicide The Roman soldiers instead of becoming captives in the hands of the enemy always preferred to commit suicide and thereby save their honour. **Lived like Grecians**—lived a life of luxury, comfort and licentiousness But the Greeks were never licentious like the Romans although they indulged in homosexuality. **Footing**—sound of footsteps.

The saffi—sergeants. **Apprehend**—arrest. **The brand**—the burning piece of wood. **Hissing already at my forehead**—i.e. threatening to burn my forehead. **Are boring**—are being pierced. **Guilty men suspect what they deserve still**—those who are guilty always fear in their heart of hearts that they shall be punished some day or other.

Scene IX

Your purpose—your purpose of disinheriting your son. **Touching your will**—about your will to disinherit your son. **Unnatural**—insane or monstrous. **Vowed**—determined. **As careful now for me** as much interested in making me the successor to Volpone's wealth and property. **My life is not more tendered**—I could not give more of my life i e. my life is entirely at your service. **Outlast**—survive **Dram**—some kind of poisonous medicine. **Parasite**—Mosca. **Scarce to the discovery of your tricks**—I am hardly welcome to the foul game you are playing i e. the game of duplicity. **You are his only**—you are in favour of Corbaccio only.

And mine also—you say at the same time that you are in favour too. **Device**—trick.

Foists—tricks **Scent them** - find out the tricks **Drawn to it by my plot**—Corbaccio has been instigated or tempted by me to make a will **Reciprocate**—make a will in return in order to give away all his wealth and property to Corbaccio. **Pass the deed**—hand over the will of disinheritance to Volpone **Being persuaded to it by this thought**—being convinced that Corbaccio wanted to disinherit his son Bonario **The unnaturalness first of the act**—the unusual behaviour of a father in the act of disinheriting his own son for nothing. **Of disclaiming in him**—frequently threatening to disinherit the son.

The law should take sufficient hold—the law will sufficiently punish him for laying violent hand upon his father. **Stated in a double hope**—placed in a position of double advantage, namely that Voltore will inherit the property not only of Volpone but also that of Corbaccio who will make a will in fovour of Volpone, and besides, when Bonario will hit his father he will be prosecuted by law and Voltore will have the chance of pleading Corbaccio's case against his son and thereby will earn his fees for pleading in a court of law.

To dig you a fortune—to earn wealth for you **Sepulchres**—tombs which contain dead bodies. **These two rotten sepulchres**—these two extremely old and crippled persons i.e. Volpone and Corbaccio. **I cry thee mercy**—I crave your pardon. **Worth your patience and your great merit**—the work of earning Volpone's wealth and property deserves your patience and your merit also i.e. it is only by holding patience and also because of your merits that you will be able to inherit the property and wealth of Volpone as well as of Corbaccio.

See the change—but what an ill luck has overtaken us all. **Most hapless**—most unfortunate. **The old raven**—Corbaccio. **On visitation**—for paying a visit to Volpone. **Anon**—soon. **Affirm**—to state. **My patron**—i.e. Volpone. **Have done her rape**—have forcibly molested her or outraged her chastity. **How unlike it is**—how

impossible it is for my old and crippled patron to outrage a young woman. **Defame**—put an ill-name. **Defeat you**—deprive you of your succession to the wealth and property of Volpone. **Sent for straight**—called immediately. **Scrutineo**—the Venetian Senate House. **Laboured all**—worked entirely. **Want of counsel**—lack of wisdom. **Fortune**—Fate. **Projects**—plans. **Clerks**—scholars. **Need makes devotion**—necessity makes one pray to God.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

It was a plot—the mountebank scene was a political show with some purpose. **What observation is**—how actcurate my observation is. **Mentioned me for some instruceions**—you asked me to give you some lessons on manners tc. **This height of Venice**—the Rialto is situated on the highest level of the city of Venice. **This meridian**—for this Rialto which is the highest place in the city of Venice. **Of your crude traveller**—by you who are an ignorant and inexperienced traveller. **At your phrase**—regarding the style or manner or language of your conversation. **Touch at**—refer to.

I have better—I wish, I could have. **As they are themes**—clothes, manners etc. as the topics of instruction. **I will slander you no more of wit**—I will no longer accuse you of the lack of intelligence. **Garb**—clothes or dress. **Grave and serious**—i.e. sober and dignified. **Very reserved and locked**—very silent and secretive i. e. not frank and open. **On any terms**—on any temptation. **Discourse**—talk or conversation.

Those be they you must converse with most—i. e. you must converse mostly with the strangers. **Scarce a fable but with caution**—never speak even a fiction without the greatest care. **But at distance**—not being at all familiar. **So as I still might be a saver in them**—so that I may be Prevented from being betrayed by the people on any occasion. **You shall have tricks else past upon you hourly**—if you do not take sufficient care, you are likely to be betrayed at every step.

Wonder at the diversity of all—simply express your admiration and surprise at the variety of human religious but never express your personal views on any of the religions. **Protest**—declare your loyalty. **You could content you**—you could rest satisfied. **Nic. Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin**—Nicollo Mechiavelli (1469—1527) was a famous Florentine statesman and author of *The Prince* in which he laid down his political views. Monsieur Bodin (1536—1590) was a French political philosopher ; his *Republics* was published and translated into English at the time when *Volpone* was published.

Were of this mind—were of this opinion. **The silver fork**—the fork which the Western people use for taking their meals ; they use the knife and the fork or the spoon and the fork. **The metal**—the quality. **Main matters**—i. e. things of greatest importance. **Know the hour**—know the proper time. **A point of state**—a matter of political importance. **Preposterous**—strange in dress or manners. **He has him straight**—the Venetian immediately makes a fool of him who does not care to follow the Venetian ways. **Strips him**—cheats him.

The forms—the ways of Venetian living. **Nothing else**—nothing of Venetian literature, philosophy, culture etc. (said ironically).

Contarene—the works of Cardinal Contarini. **Moveables**—furniture and other household things. **To mine own heart**—to my liking. **Should not think again**—should not worry about his future prospects, any more. **Command it**—have full control over fortune. **Projects**—plans or schemes, **Discover**—disclose. **One to wager with**—one scheme to bank upon. **Lay odds now**—put a high stake i e. risk a big amount of money. **Tells me instantly**—discloses his schemes immediately.

Red herrings—a kind of fish. **I have correspondence**—I am negotiating. **To that purpose**—for importing red herrings. **Mark**—secret sign. **Chandler**—a dealer in candle, soap, oil etc, **Chessemonger**—a dealer in cheese. **Treat**—deal. **Negociation**—dealing. **Cast it all**—planned the whole scheme. **Hoy**—a boat with one mast. **She shall make me three returns a year**—every year the boat will be able

to go out and bring in the things thrice at least. **Returns**—voyages or trips. **One of three**—one trip out of three trips. **Defalk**—reduce or lose a little.

Draw the subtle air—breathe the foul atmosphere. **Dissemble**—pretend. **Considerative**—prudent or wise; or speculative. **Certain goods**—some beneficial thing.

Cautions—precautionary measures. **Pension**—some permanent allowance. **Propound**—explain. **The Great Council**—the elective body of the noblemen of Venice. **The Forty**—the Senate of Venice consisted of forty members. **The Ten**—the Council of ten members who ruled over the Senate.

My means are made already—I have already decided to do what I have planned. **His place be obscure**—his position may not be sufficiently high or important. **Sway**—carry the influence. **Commander**—i.e. a sergeant. **Such as they are**—however humble they may be in rank or position. **Greater**—more influential members. **On your gentry**—upon your respectable birth. **Anticipate**—think or do beforehand. **Reveal a circumstance**—disclose any detail of the scheme. **Tinder-boxes**—match-boxes **Portable**—capable of being carried easily. **Put case**—assume.

Ill-affected unto the state—i. e. disloyal to the government. **Arsenal**—a dockyard for the construction and repair of ships. **None the wiser**—i. e. none knowing. anything. **Advertise**—warn. **Patriots**—loyal citizens. **Suffered**—permitted. **Enjoy them**—use the tinder-boxes. **Sealed at some office**—i e licensed by some office. **Lurk in pockets**—lie hidden in pockets. **To enquire**—to find out. **Be resolved**—be determined. **Present demonstration**—immediate proof. **Soria**—Syria. **Suspected part**—any country which is infected by plague. **The Levant**—the Eastern part of the Mediterreanean covering the coast-lands of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. **Guilty of**—infected by. **The Lazaretto**—a place for disinfecting the ships, which are suspected to carry any infection of plague or other such diseases. **For their trial**—for resting the ships whether or not they carry any infection of plague.

That charge and loss—the heavy expenses charged for testing a ship and also the loss of money suffered on account of the detention of the ship at the port or Lazaretto. **Clear the doubt**—remove the suspicion about the infection of plague **Lose my labour**—lose my job or office. **My faith that's much** surely to lose one's job on that account is too great a loss

Conceive me—understand me. **Livres**—French coins. **Water-works**—machinery for driving water. **Venture**—under-take. **Strain me a fair tarpauling**—draw tightly a broad piece of tarpauline. **Loop-holes**—small openings. **Bellows**—an implement for blowing air. **Perpetual**—constant. **The easiest matter of a hundred**—i. e. the easiest thing in the world.

Attract the infection—draw the contagion of plague. **Upon him** upon the onion. **By his changed colour**—by the changed colour of the onion. **Contagion**—infection. **Remain as fair as at the first**—look as bright as it was before. **Now it is known, it is nothing**—now that the secret has been disclosed, it bears no importance. **Were I false**—if I were a traitor to the government of Venice. **Sell this state**—betray the state of Venice and earn a lot of money. **Spite of**—in spite of. **Gallies**—war-ships.

Notandum—note carefully. **Gnawn**—eaten away. **Spur-leathers**—straps of leather for fastening the spurs to the shoes. **Threw three beans over the threshold**—three beans are thrown in order to prevent any mischance—this is of course an instance of superstition. **Tooth-picks**—metallic pointed pins for picking any food particle from the teeth. **Burst**—broke. **Discourse**—conversation or discussion.

Region del stato—reasons of state. **Moccinigo**—a Venetian coin worth about nine pence. **Piecing**—mending or stitching up. **Cheap end**—reduced the price. **Sprats**—a kind of fish. **Urined** passed urine **Faith these are politic notes**—these are really very important notes (said ironically). **Slip**—omit. **Quote it**—put it down in the diary.

Scene II.

This loose knight—this Sir Politick Would-be, who is

a man of loose character. **He is housed**—he is locked up with a prostitute. **He is fast and loose**—he is engaged in his sexual intercourse with the prostitute. **Plays both**—plays fast and loose i. e. behaves treacherously.

His heart—i. e. his love. **Hinder**—prevent. **Take him**—catch him red-handed i. e. while he is enaged in his sexual intercourse with the prostitute. **It comes off**—the paint comes off from the face.

In man's apparel—the prostitute has been disguised in the dress of a man. **Jog**—give a gentle push. **Tender to his reputation**—gentle to his honour. **Demerit**—i.e. not deserve. **Were she not mine**—if she were not my wife. **Durst**—dare. **Commend**--praise. **Discourse**—conversation or discussion. **She cannot miss that**—she cannot but be talkative like you (Sir Politick). **Use him fairly**—treat him gently. **None**—no youth at all but a woman. **Put his face as soon in the world**—has made a mark in society quite quickly. **How is this**—what do you mean ?

Habit—dress. **Apprehend**—understand. **Become you**—is proper for you. **Odour**—reputation. **This dire massacre**—this great havoc or ruin. **One of your gravity and rank**—a man of your dignity and position. **Oath**—solemn pledge or promise. **Own ladies**—i e. wives **By my spurs**—in the name of my knighthood ; spur is the symbol of knighthood. **How his brain is humbled for an oath**—how poor is his intellect as compared with his title or position of a knight. **Reach you not**—do not understand you. **Your policy**—your diplomacy. **Bear it through thus**—put up a show like this or behave in this strange manner.

A word with you--I want to speak to you. **Loth**—unwilling. **Contest publicly**—openly run into a competition. **Forward**—shameless. **The courtier**—the man of refined manners. **Too near rusticity**—very much like barbarism or want of culture. **Shun**—avoid. **One fair gentlewoman**—i.e Peregrine who is suspected to be a lady in male disguise. **Persever**—to persist or continue in that action (of insulting a gentle-woman) **Warranted**—regarded. **Solecism**—indecency. **In our sex**—i.e. of women.

Come nearer to your aim—explain more clearly what you really mean. **Provoke**—tease or excite. **Impudence**—impertinence or rude behaviour. **Light**—of loose character. **Land syren**—enchantress living in land as distinguished from sea sirens. **Sporus**—the youth whom Emperor Nero loved and whom he married after having made him a eunuch. **Hermaphrodite**—a creature having qualities of both the sexes. Here Peregrine is regarded as a hermaphrodite because he is suspected to be a woman in male dress.

Poetic fury—height of poetic fancy or inspiration in the form of such expressions as 'Sporus', 'Hermaphrodite' etc. **Historic storms**—outbursts in the form of some fits. **Of our nation**—belonging to the English people. **White-friars nation**—i. e the race of people of questionable character ; White-friars is a disreputable locality in London which originally was a religious sanctuary but which later on became the shelter for all sorts of criminais and debauches. **Blush for you**—feel ashamed of you. **Master Would-be**—i. e. Sir Politick Would-be. **No more forehead**—no more sense or brain. **St. George**—he was the patron saint of England. **Lewd**—licentious. **Fricatrice**—prostitute.

A female devil—a wicked woman. **Male outside**—male dress. **An**—if. **You**—Peregrine. **Your delights**—your enjoyments. **Too liquid**—very clear.

Carry it clear—escape with impunity or safety. **State face**—sober-looking face. **Carnival**—making such as masquerading. **Concupiscence**—hidden sex desire. **Liberty of conscience**—freedom of will. **Furious persecution**—severe punishment. **Marshal**—custodian of prisons and prisoners. **Disciple**—bring under control. **Use this often**—adopt this method of luring people. **Wit's exercise**—display of humour. **Beg shirts**—ask for ordinary articles such shirts etc. **A nearer way**—in plainer words. **By far**—most easily. **Work you out of my snare**—get you out of my clutches. **In it**—in the snares or clutches. **Inclines**—tends to be or resembles. **Next the sun**—almost as red as the sun. **Queen apple**—a kind of red apple.

Endu'ed by any patience—tolerated by any person of great patience.

Scene III.

Right not my quest in this—do not grant me justice in this matter i. e. in the matter of my husband associating with a prostitute. **Prot st them to all the world**—expose the senators publicly. **No aristocracy**—no dignity of the senators. **Callet**—prostitute. **Taken disguised**—caught in male-clothes. **Apprehended**—arrested. **Wandered**—gone the wrong way. **Blushing**—feeling ashamed. **Erred**—committed a mistake. **Plead your pardon** ask for your forgiveness. **More changes**—more tricks. **Malice**—meanness. **Passion**—anger.

Use me—meet me. **This is rare**—this is a very strange and unbe'ievable thing. **Sir Politick Bawd** Sir Politick, the procurer of men for his wife. **'Bawd'** means a procuress. **Freshmanship**—inexperience. **Salt-head**—experienced brain. **What p oof**—how secure. **Counter-plot**—a plot put up against another plot.

Scene IV.

The carriage of the business—the procedure of the case against Bonario. **Constancy**—consistency or determination to stick to the point. **The safety of it**—the success of the case. **The lie**—the false story. **Conveyed**—explained. **Burden**—responsibility. **Shrink not**—do not go back upon your position. **The advocate**—i. e. Voltore. **The truth**—the real story of the case. **Devised** arranged or invented. **A formal tale**—a false story. **Salved**—saved. **Valian** brave. **Stand for a co-h ir**—i e., be a candidate for half of the property of Volpone along with me.

Co-halter—a halter or rope for hanging both the persons i. e., Voltore and Corvino or Corbaccio and Bonario. **Use his tongue**—take advantage of the power of eloquence (pleading) of Voltore. **His noise**—his loud arguments or pleedings. **As we do croakers here**—as we are taking advantage of Corbaccio, the raven who merely croaks and makes noise.

Sell him for mummie—sell his dead body for curing

wounds for stopping blood Mummies are dead bodies which are preserved in the pyramids of Egypt for thousands of years ; and it is believed that ancient dead bodies can cure any kind of wound. **Half dust**—half dead **This buffalo**—i. e., Corvino. **How he doth sport it with his head**—how proudly he displays the horns on his head as the husband of a faithless wife. **I should, if all were well and past**—these words are supposed to be spoken by Voltore. He means to say that he would have proudly held up his head if everything went right and every problem were over i.e., if Volpone were dead and Voltore were appointed his successor.

The crop of all—the fruit of all labour, i. e. the entire property of Volpone. **These**—persons other than Corbaccio. **Toil**—work hard. **You shall eat it much**—you will suffer most. **Worshipful**—reverend; honourable. **Mercury**—god of eloquence. **Sit upon your thundering tongue**—give you the greatest power of eloquence. **The French Hercules**—the Celtic Hercules as distinguished from the Greek Hercules is noted for his power of eloquence **As conquering as his club**—as invincible as the powerful club of Hercules. **With a tempest**—with the greatest force or power. **Our adversaries**—i.e., Bonario and others. **Much more yours**—they are more your enemies than of Volpone. **Flat**—completely defeated. **Have done**—finish your talk.

The like of this—a case similar to this **Of unreproved name**— of good or spotless reputation. **The gentlewoman**—i. e. Celia. **The youth** i e., — Bonario. **The more unnatural part**—the more unnatural character. **His father**—i.e., Corbaccio. **Give his act a name**—i.e , describe his action (the action of Corvino) **Monstrous**—ugly and strange. **The imposter**—the pretender i e., Volpone. **To exceed example**—to be without any parallel. **All after-times**—all future days.

Voluptuary—one addicted to sensual pleasures. **Cited**—summoned officially to appear in a court of law. **Magnifico**—nobleman. **Your fatherhoods**—i.e , you senators. **Feeble** — weak. **Parasite** — dependent and exploiter.

Pandar—pimp i. e. procurer of women. **Impostures**—pretensions or treacherous practices. **Credit with your virtues**—trust in your worships. **Endure the air**—stand or bear the rudeness or foulness of the atmosphere. **Your father-hood's fit pleasure be obeyed**—the proper wishes of your worships will be fulfilled.

Move your pities—make you kind. **Indignation**—anger. **He may be heard in me**—I may present his case. **Void of**—free from. **This place**—i e , the court of the senate. **Crave it**—pray for it. **Our truth**—our honesty. **Hurt our cause**—injure our position.

Speak free—speak without any hesitation or fear. **Discover**—disclose. **Strangely abused cars**—mind prejudiced with unnatural lies. **Prodigious**—very great. **Frontless**—shameless. **Solid impudence** — positive shamelessness. **Vicious nature**—wicked character. **Brought forth to shame**—i.e., disgraced. **Lewd**—licentious. **Wants**—lacks. **Vizor**—mask. **Close**—intimate. **Adulteress**—a woman who has illicit connections with other persons than her own husband. **Lascivious**—licentious. **Taken in the act**—caught red-handed in the act of sexual intercourse. **Easy husband**—gentle and kind or easily forgiving husband.

Timeless bounty—ill-advised or untimely kindness. **Man's own goodness made accused**—man's good qualities treated as bad qualities, and charged against the very person who possess such good qualities. **Owe a gift of that dear grace**—acknowledge the favour of forgiveness from a generous person like Corvino. **Being placed so above all powers of their gratitude**—being most ungrateful. **Hate the benefit**—hate the person (Corvino) who gave the benefit or granted the favour of forgiveness. **Devise**—try. **Extirpe**—destroy or wipe out. **Such an act**—generosity of Corvino. **Malice**—meanness and wickedness **Rage**—anger. **Discovered in their evils**—caught red-handed in the act of sexual intercourse. **What heart**—what courage. **Such take**—such persons as Bonario and Celia derive. **Their crimes**—the sexual act of Bonario and Celia. **Anon**—soon. **More appear**—become more clear. **This foul fact**—i.e., the sexual act between Bonario and Celia. **Many**

others—many other sexual crimes. **Too tender ears**—unduly sensitive mind.

Greived—wounded at heart. **That strange food**—that unusual extent. **Decreed**-decided. **Strange turns**—unnatural happenings. **Beguile**—deceive. **Under shade of virtue**—under cover or pretext of good qualities. **Honour's sires**—honourable gentlemen. **This settled purpose**—the purpose of disinheriting the son. **Betrayed**—treacherously; exposed. **Appointed for the deed**—fixed for the execution of the will of disinheritance of the son. **Parricide**—murderer of one's father. **Style him better**—call him by any better name than a murderer of his father. **Confederacy**—secret understanding. **Paramour**—beloved. (Celia). **Designed for the inheritance**—appointed by the deed as the successor to the property of Corbaccio. **Tremble to pronounce it**—shudder to declare or disclose the purpose. **Felonious intent**—criminal or murderous purpose.

His more happy absence—the lucky absence of Corbaccio. **An act of horror**—a most outrageous act, namely, dragging out the old crippled Volpone from the couch and laying him on the bare floor. **Bed-rid**—confined to bed. **This strumpet**—this prostitute i. e., Celia. **The stale to his forged practice**—the old victim of his wicked dealings. **Your fatherhoods**-your venerable noblemen. **Collections** — conclusions. **Father's ends**—Corbaccio's purpose of disinheriting his son. **Discredit his free choice**—disprove the free will of Corbaccio in disinheriting the son. **Redeem themselves**—free themselves from the guilt. **Infamy** — ill-name. **This man**—i. e., Volpone. **With blushing**—with feeling of shame. **Owe their lives**—admit the preservation of their lives.

Credit—trust or faith. **Mercenary tongue**—hired eloquence of pleading a case in a court of law. **Forbear**—stop. **His soul moves in his feet**—his mind or tongue is guided by money. **Sols**—Venetian coins. One sol is equal to half a penny. **Maker**—i. e., God. **Forget yourself**—i. e., talk nonsense. **Scope**—freedom to speak. **Spare his accuser**—will not abuse the person who accuses him. **A creature**—a human being. **Has he had an oath**—

has he made a solemn declaration that he will speak the truth and nothing but the truth ? Every person giving evidence for or against a case in a court of law has to take an oath that he will speak the truth.

Testimony is craved—evidence is wanted **The knave**—i e , Bonario. **Have my mouth first stopped with earth**—i e , become dead. **Abhors his knowledge** hates to acknowledge him as the son **Disclaim in him** refuse to accept him as my son. **The mere portent of nature**—nothing but an evil mark. **An utter stranger to my loins**—i e., not at all my son. **Made you to this**—coached you to speak like this **Monster of men**—the most hateful of mankind. **Parricide**—murderer of one's father. **Viper**—a poisonous snake. **Wish my innocence should suffer**—wish myself to suffer in spite of my innocence.

Is he sworn—has he taken the oath to speak the truth. **Whore**—prostitute. **Hot exercise**—lustful desire. **Partrich**—a kind of bird known as partridge. **Neighs like a jennet**—gives a loud signal like a mare (female horse) for mating (sex-union). **The honour of the court**—the decency of the court. **Modesty of your most revered ears**—decency in words to be suitable to the ears of honourable persons **Glued**—clinging closely. **That piece of cedar** *i e* , Bonario who is as tall and robust as a cedar tree. **Well-timbered**—well-built. **Gallant** a brave or chivalrous person. **Here**—on the forehead. **The letter may be read** the word 'cuckold' may be seen written on the forehead of Corvino **Thorough the horn**—perfect foolery or slavery of the husband of a faithless wife. **Make the story perfect**—make the story true.

There is no shame in this—Corvino wants to know from Mosca if it is a shameful thing for a husband to scandalise his wife openly in a court of law? **Onward to her damnation** - on the way to her punishment in hell **A hell greater than whore and woman** a fouler thing than a prostitute or a woman. **A good Catholic may make the doubt**—a pious Catholic believes that a woman is not the worst creature in the universe. **Frantic**—mad. **Swoons**—falls into a fainting fit.

Prettily feigned – very cleverly pretended. **Stand from about her**—stand away from her. **Give her the fir** –give her sufficient room to breathe fresh air. **Speaks for me**—expresses my position how badly I have been assaulted. **That well taught dame**—that well-tutored woman i e , Celia. **Had her given her**—had coached her to say. **A rape** – a forcible outrage on the modesty of a woman. **Most laid impudence**—a very cleverly arranged act of impertinence. **Doubt the imposture** suspect this pretender i.e , Bonario. **Has too many moods** –i e , a pretender of various states of mind. **Profest**—declared. **Prostituted lewdness**—looseness of character due to the habit of selling the body. **Impetuous**—violent. **Feignings**—pretensions **Take your wisdoms**—deceive your honourable selves **Baited**—hooked or succeeded in tempting. **Loose eyes**—lustful glances. **Lascivious**—licentious. **Gondola**—pleasure-boat. **Without** —outside. **They strike with wonder**—these incidents appear to be most inconceivable. **Turned a stone**—extremely surprised to the point of becoming speechless and motionless.

Scene VI

Camelion harlot—prostitute who can pretend her character in various ways just as a camelion (a species of lizard) can change its colour from time to time. **Vie**—compete. **Hyaena**—an animal that is in the habit of laughing but not of shedding tears as Ben Jonson wrongly says, here.

My wronged face—my injured self. **Forgettingly**—unconsciously. **Transgrest**—exceeded the limits **Exorbitant** —unusually strong in expression. **My breeding**—my blood or birth. **Coarse**—vulgar or low or mean. **With pertinacy**—i.e , deliberately or purposely **Such a presence** –such a body of honourable persons like the senators. **Let her overcome**—let her control her feelings. **Make good your report** —to prove your statements true. **Our conscience**—our sense of fairness and justice.

Heaven—God. **That never fails the innocent**—God always takes the side of the innocent people. **These are no testimonies**—God and heaven cannot be regarded as witnesses (because they are not visible or even perceptible

to any of the senses. **Multitude**—number. **Clamour**—noise or eloquence. **Overcomes**—succeeds. **Wax insolent**—become impertinent. **Testimony**—witness. **Ravisher**—molester of women.

The rider on men's wives—the corruptor and enjoyer of other's wives. **Imposter**—pretender. **Voluptuary**—one who is addicted to sensual or sexual enjoyments.

Affect venery—pursue sexual pleasures. **Covet**—desire to possess. **Concubine**—private prostitute. **Dissemble**—pretend. **Proved**—unmasked or revealed in true character. **Goads**—pointed steel. **Strappado**—a kind of torturing instrument. **Rack**—a kind of torturing instrument. **Gout**—painful swelling of the joints of limbs due to rheumatism. **Malady**—disease. **Adulterers**—persons who indulge in illicit sexual intercourse. **Strumpets**—prostitutes. **Equal hearers**—just or unprejudiced listeners. **Exorbitant strain**—unusual character.

Pass with sufferance—escape without penalty. **Owes the forfeit of life**—i.e., is liable to lose his life. **Fame to him**—he will earn fame. **Traduce**—publicly accuse. **Which of you are safe**—*i.e*, none of you will be free from accusation. **With leave**—with permission. **Face or colour**—any touch or point of resemblance. **Like to truth**—similar to truth. **Dullest nostril**—most insensitive or indifferent person. **Smell not rank**—does not appear to be foul.

Abhorred—hateful. **Slander**—ill-name or infamy. **Their fable**—fictitious story or false statements of the accusers of Volpone. **Hot and fleshed**—lustfully excited. **Impious acts**—immoral acts. **Their constancy abounds**—there is consistency, or method in the acts of the wicked or licentious persons. **Damned deeds**—evil deeds or immoral acts. **With greatest confidence**—with greatest steadfastness. **Take them to custody**—put them in the lock-up. **Sever them**—separate Bonario from Celia.

Prodigies—unusual characters. **Returned**—sent back. home. **Credulity**—undue readines to believe everything.

Wronged him—injured Volpone. **These are two creatures**—Bonario and Celia are most contemptible creatures.

I have an earthquake in me—I have got unusual fits of anger. **In their cradles**—in their infancy. **Fled their faces**—*i. e.*, did not appear on their face. **In their discovery**— by exposing them. **Decrees**—orders or issues.

Tipt with gold for this—covered with gold for pleading the case so successfully. **Heir to the whole city**—owner of the whole city of Venice. **The earth I would have want men**—I would wish nobody should be living on earth. **Ere you want living**—before you wanted to live on earth. **Erect your statue** -glorify you and cherish your memory by putting up a statue of yours. **Shew yourself**—display or declare yourself. **You have conquered**—you have succeeded at the cost of your good name *i.e.* by being branded as a cuckold. **The other should have been proved**—your wife should have been proved to be a prostitute.

Doubt this advocate—suspect Voltore to be a dishonest fellow. **Ease you of that care**—relieve you of that suspicion (that Voltore is a dishonest fellow). **As your own soil**—as the most dependable person.

Rest you with both your eyes—remain perfectly secure or in peace. **Dispatch it**—execute the will (of Volpone).

Prodigal—liberal or extravagant. **Tender**—pay the fees of the advocate. **Chequines**—a Venetian gold coin worth five shillings. **Talked the great while**—pleaded for a long time.

Bountiful bones—most healthy body (said ironically). **What horrid strange offence did he commit against nature**—Corbaccio must have committed great irregularities in eating and drinking and also must have indulged in foul vices because otherwise he could not have become so crippled. **Worthy this age**—fit for his old age.

Unto your ends-for serving your interest. **The devil and all**—all the punishments and sufferings of hell.

Reform his will—change or correct his will (a deed for the gift or property). **Zeal**—earnestness. **Third or fourth**—in point of preference for a successor to the property of Volpone. **Appear as begged**—look like begging, and not like claiming as a matter of right. **Sway**—rule.

ACT V.

Scene I.

Brunt—trouble. **My disguise**—my dress of an invalid. **Fled moment**—past moment. **Cave**—be warned. **Whilst I breathe**—so long I am alive. **Cramp**—violent pain. **Apprehended straight**—perceived immediately.

Dead palsy—some kind of paralysis which deadens the sensibilities **Shake it off**—forget the numbness of my limbs. **Villainous**—vile or foul. **Come thick**—come in a crowd or one after another. **Bowl**—pot. **Lusty**. bright or vigorous or health-giving. **To fright**—to scare away. **This humour**—this state of fear **Device**—trick. **Ingenious Knavery**—clever act of wickedness.

Make me up—restore me to my jolly mood. **Heat**—excitement. **Blood**—passion.

Scene II.

Does the day look clear again ?—Do we feel safe again? **Are we recovered**—have we been relieved of the shock ? **Wrought out of error**—i.e. the mistake corrected. **Into our normal way**—into our normal way of working.

To see our path before us—to find out our way to success. **Is our trade free ?**—is our profession of cheating the people quite safe from the danger of exposure or detection ?

Exquisite—wonderful **Carried learnedly**—conducted skilfully. **Stoutly**—strongly. **Good wits**—intelligent brains. **Greatest in extremities**—most skilful or successful in moments of crisis.

A folly beyond thought—an act of utmost stupidity. **To trust any grand act**—to entrust the responsibility of an important job. **A cowardly spirit**—a timid person. **Taken with it**—impressed or delighted by the scene at the senate. **Methinks**—I think. **The wench**—the woman i.e. Celia.

The pleasure of all womankind's not like it—the pleasure which is derived from the enjoyment of all the women in the world is not equal to the enjoyment of Celia's

beauty and youth. **Our masterpiece**—our greatest triumph. **Played the prize**—on the greatest triumph. **Gull**—befool or make a fool of.

Divert the torrent—change the direction of the attack. **The innocent**—Celia and Bonario. **The make so rare a music out of discords**—to win success in spite of so many obstacles just like making a harmony out of many unmusical notes. **Borne it**—conducted the whole affair. **So divided**—so much opposed to one another. **Scent somewhat**—come to know the secrets to some extent. **Doubt their own side**—suspect the honesty of their own. **Will not see it**—will not be able to detect the secret understanding.

Too much light blinds them—too much of shrewdness makes them fools. **Possest and stuft**—occupied and filled. **Unto the contrary**—i e., the opposite of it. **Apparent**—clear. **Palpable**—clearly visible. **Resist it**—oppose the thing **Signiors**—noble men. **Yields well**—produces good crops. **Glebe**—cultivated land. **More fruitful than these fellows**—more paying than Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino etc. **Deceived**—mistaken **Did not your advocate rare ?**—did not Voltore plead your case most wonderfully ? **Under correction of your fatherhoods**—subject to the correction of the senators. **What face of truth here ?**—what lies have been put forward here. **May pass**—may go without punishment. **Much ado**—much difficulty. **Forbear**—stop **Sweat**—perspire.

In troth—in truth or truly. **Daunted**—frightened. **In good faith**—truly. **In a mist**—confused. **Dejected**—disheartened. **Still myself**—always in my senses. **Out of conscience**-out of a sense of justice.

Speak it under favour-speak it with your permission. **Contrary you**—contradict you. **Cozened**—cheated. **The latter end** the last part of the trial. **Draw it to certain heads**-come to certain conclusions. **Aggravate**-make foul or grave charges. **Vehement figures**—strong and significant figures of speech **Shift a shirt**—change his argument. **Answer him**—reward Voltore. **Entreaty**—earnest request. **Vex them**—tease them (Corbaccio, Corvino, Voltore etc.) **Jig**—dance.

Give out about the streets—declare everywhere. **With constancy**—with all seriousness. **Impute it**—ascribe or attribute my death. **This late slander**—the recent insult due to infamy. **Vulture** - Voltore. **Crow**—Corvino. **Raven** – Corbaccio. **To peck for carrion**—to look for the dead body of Volpone. **She-wolf**—Lady Politick. **Ravished**—snatched away. **That has the blanks**—that is empty. **Rare** – wonderful. **Gape**—open the mouth in wonder. **Deluded** deceived. **Scurvily**—contemptuously.

Dispatch—be quick. **Corrupted**—decomposed. **Stunk**—gave out a foul smell because of the body. **Fain** – willingly. **Coffined up**—put in a coffin (a box for the dead body). **Inventory**—a list of articles. **Hearken**—listen. **Their blood doth leave their faces**—i. e., they look pale. **A rare meal of laughter**—a very great cause for laughter. **Turn stark dull**—become most dejected. **Oratory's edge**— —i.e., skill in eloquence or in the art of pleading a case in a court of law.

Your clarissimo—your Venetian noble i. e. Corbaccio. **Crump you like a hog-house**—bend double with grief and despair. **With a rope and dagger**—i.e. behaving like a madman. **Such another medicine**—an equally good medicine or remedy for drying up sweat and oil). **Offensive savours**—foul smell. **Transforms**—changes. **The most deformed**—the most disfigured persons. **Restores them lovely**—makes the ugly persons handsome. **The strange poetical girdle**——the girdle of Venus (goddess of love). is supposed to have the power of making the ugly persons handsome.

Shroud—winding-sheet for the dead body. **Subtle**—cunning ; or skilful. **To pass Acrisius's guards**—to deceive the sentinels placed by Danae's father (Acrisius) in order to guard her from Zeus who got admission into Danae's chamber by showering gold i. e., by bribing the sentinels. Zeus begot Parseus in Danae and Parseus killed the grandfather of Danae as it was predicted.

It is the thing makes all the world her grace, her youth beauty- it is gold or money which can make the ugly

beautiful, the old young, and the disfigured handsome. **Vulture** – i. e., Voltore. **The quickest scent**—the earliest news of the death of Volpone. **The posture**—your position behind the screen **I am set**—I am ready **Artificer** – a skilful plotter. **Torture them rarely**—give them the greatest pain.

Scene III

Taking an inventory—making a list of articles. **Tissue**—silk worked with silver and gold **The while**—in the meanwhile. **Is it done**—has the will of Volpone been executed ? or is Volpone dead ? **Several velvets**—many kinds of velvet. **His care**—the interest and care with which he is counting the articles. **Is the hour come**—is Volpone dead ? **Muster**—gather together. **Is his thread spun**—is Volpone dead ? Life is here compared with a piece of thread which is spun on the wheel of fate.

Linen—cotton cloth **Rid them hence**—drive them away from here by pointing out that none of them has been appointed the successor to Volpone's wealth and property. **Diaper damask**—rich linen cloth **Down-beds**—beds stuffed with soft feathers. **Bolsters**—long and fat side-pillows. **Rare**—wonderful. **Begin to flutter**—begin to get excited. **The long deed**—the Will drafted in full length. **The name**—the name of the successor to Volpone **The legacies**—the various articles mentioned in the Will as gifts to somebody. **Bequeathed**—mentioned as gifts.

Ten Suits of hangings—ten sets of curtains. **In their garters**—i.e., in a state of being hanged. **At the gasp**—breathing the last i. e., dying. **Heard of some storm**—got the news of some destructive cause. **Swoon**—faint. **Glazen**—glassy i.e., without any power of vision. **Reached his despair yet**—has not yet reached the height of his disappointment ; i. e., he has not seen as yet the name of Mosca mentioned as the successor to Volpone. **Out of hope**—i.e , in despair. **I am sure the man**—I am surely the successor to Volpone.

Cabinets—cupboards. **Is this In earnest**—is Mosca really very serious ? **Delude me**—deceive me. **Mother of pearl**—oyster, which contains pearls. **A fortune thrown upon me**—the succession to Volpone's wealth and property has been bestowed upon me without my desire to have it. **Salt of agate**—a salt cellar (bowl) made of some precious stone known as agate. **Not my seeking**—I did not try to have all this wealth. **Perfumed box**—a box containing all sorts of perfumes. **Forbear**—stop disturbing me. **Troubled**—disturbed. **At leisure**—free. **Large hope's issue**—the result of my high expectations.

Quit—leave. **Tempest**—great disturbance or loud noise. **Hark**—listen. **Offered me to put you in an heir**—agreed to be my mistress if I made you my successor. **Best madams**—most virtuous women. **Any why not you ?**—why should you not agree to be my mistress when the most virtuous women agree to be so in order to earn wealth ? **Riddles**—stories (about you). **O, my fine devil**—addressed to Mosca who is acting most wonderfully in order to torture Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino and others. **Pray you a word**—please let me speak one word to you. **Take your dispatch hence**—get away from here. **The example**—the first to leave the place. **Fain**—willingly.

Wittol—one who knowingly allows his wife to be faithless in love. **On good terms**—i. e., willingly. **Much here else**—many other thinkings lying here. **These good deeds**—the offer of gifts to Volpone. **Hide your bad**—conceal your bad deeds. namely, that you have offered your wife to Volpone for enjoyment and also have declared before the senators that your wife had sexual intercourse with Bonario. **Betray you**—disclose the secret that you offered your wife to Volpone for enjoyment.

Extraordinary—unusual in the matter of offering your wife to Volpone and also in declaring her to be a prostitute. **Have it only in title**—be a cuckold only in name. **It sufficeth**—it is sufficient. **Becomes him**—adorns him. **Delude**—deceive. **All for me**—in order to tell me that I have been appointed the successor to Volpone's wealth

and property. **His four eyes**—i.e , his two eyes and his glasses. **Cozened**—deceived. **A parasite slave**—a dependent wretch. **Harlot**—rogue. **Gulled**—fooled or cheated. **Covetous**—greedy. **With the three legs**—with two legs and a prop. **In hope of prey**—in expectation of making a victim of either Volpone or Mosca. **Snuffed about**—loitered. **Grovelling**—degrading or mean. **Perjured yourself**—given a false evidence. **Stink**—give out a foul smell from your decomposed body after death. **Croak a syllable**—speak a single word. **All comes out**—I will disclose all your secrets. **Porters**—stretcher-bearers. **Varlet**—knave.

Constancy—faitfulness. **Porphyry**—a red ston· **Marle**—wonder. **Thus troublesome**—disturbing in thi· manner. **Leave of flow**—stop pretending now. **Cry you mercy**—beg your pardon. **Travails**—labours. **Without it**—without the rights of succession to Volpone's property. **A gift**—the gift of eloquence. **Let you want**—allow you to need money. **Malice**—mean wickedness. **Breed causes**—produce causes of quarrel which lead to litigations. **Half the like**—half of your gift of eloquence. **Suits**—legal cases. **So easy and direct**—so simple and without any complication. **Make bloo l with**—take liberty with.

Obstrepous aid—lould eloquence. **Conceive me**—understand me. **Covetous**—greedy. **My plate**—the silver tray which was presented by Voltore to Volpone but which now belongs to Mosca. **To set up**—to establish in life. **Costive**—constipative. **Purge**—take a purgative in order to remove your constipation. **Lettuce**—a kind of green leafy vegetable, which is taken as a salad. **Witty mischie**—humorous rogue ; it is a term of endearment. **Transform**—change. **Habit**—dress. **Clarissimo**—a Venetian noble.

Torment—torture. **Pursue**—follow up the fun **This feast**—this great fun. **Lose them**—lose the persons as sources of gifts and other kinds of income. **My recovery**—my recovery from feigned illness. **Recover all**—compensate everything. **Vex**—tease and annoy. **Every turn**—

every step. **Commandadori**—sergeant. **Habit**—clothes or dress. **Answering thy brain**—doing credit to your intelligence. **A sharp disease**—a cause or source of pain. **Look for curses**—expect abuses. **Burst**—die of pain. **The Fox**—*i. e.*, Volpone. **Fares ever best**—enjoys most. **Curst**—abused.

Scene IV.

Enough disguised—sufficiently concealed my identity. **Warrant**—assure. **Fright him**—frighten Sir Politick. **Ship him away**—send him away from Venice. **Zant**—in Greece. **Allepo**—in Syria. **The Book of Voyages**—the book of sea voyages, both real and imaginary. **Gulled story**—false or imaginary story. **Registered for truth**—recorded as true. **I am in a while**—I am in the house of Sir Politick for some time. **Warm in our discourse**—busily engaged in our conversation. **Know your approaches**—know it as the proper time for getting into the house of Sir Politick.

Trust it to our care—leave it to our responsibility. **Earnest business**—urgent business. **The family is all female here**—the people in this house seem to be all women. **Weighty affairs of state**—important affairs of the government. **Require him whole**—require his entire time and attention. **Possess him**—meet him. **Exact him**—bring him out. **Tidings**—news. **Bolognian sausages**—sausages made in Bologna were quite famous. Sausage is minced meat put in the guts or entrials of sheep or goats. **Sparing**—leaving out. **Ingredients**—factors or elements or constituents.

Wills—wishes. **Return him**—send him. **Proclamations**—political announcements. **Studied them for words**—read them carefully. **Deigns**—condescends or stoops or agrees graciously **Crave**—request or pray for. **Disaster**—a great misfortune. **Penning**—writing.

A fugitive punk—a ran-away woman of loose character. **Made relation**—made statements. **Apprehend**—arrest.

Frail—a basket for holding figs and raisins. **Were rare**—were wonderful **Aboard**—on a ship. **For discourse sake**—for the sake of merely holding a conversation.

Currant-but—a cask for holding currants (raisins) or wine (currant wine). **The rack**—a kind of instrument for torture. **Ingine**—some kind of mechanism or device or contrivance. **These extremities**—such critical moments **Study**—reading-room. **Bear a cart**—bear a very load like a cart. **Can he not go**—can he not move ?

Creeps—moves very slowly. **Heart**—a kind of oath. **Prick his guts**—i.e try his power of endurance. **Forth**—come put or start moving. **Ods so**—an expression of wonder or surprise.

Garters—straps for holding on the socks to the legs. **We are even**—we have come to a compromise **The funeral or your notes**—the burning of your notes **A rare motion**—a very interesting puppet show. **In the Term**—during a particular period **Most Politic tortoise**—i.e., Sir Politick Would-be.

Knows she of this ?—does my wife know about this personal humiliation of mine ? **The fable of all feasts**—the subject of talks at the dinner-table. **The freight of the gazetti**—the common topic of the newspapers.

The ship boy's tale—the story related by the sailors all over the world. **Ordinaries**—ordinary people. **Straight to sea**—go out immediately on a sea voyage **Physic**—medicine ; cure or restoration of health. **Shun**—quit or leave. **Clime**—country. **Creeping with house on back**—i.e., like a tortoise **Shrink my poor head in my politic shell** conceal my miserable self inside a tortoise shell.

Scene V.

Sever you—distinguish you from a clarissimo or sergeant, at-law. **'Fore heaven**—a kind of oath. **A brave clarissimo**—a courageous sergeant-at-law. **Becomest it**—

resemble a sergeant-at-law. **Born one**—born as a clarissimo or sergeant at-law. **My made one**—i.e., the disguise of a clarissimo which I am putting on. **My fox is out of the hole**—my master Volpone has now gone out of his house. **Languish in his borrowed case** -suffer by putting the disguise of a sergeant-at law. **Come to composition with me**—come to a compromise with me

Abroad—outside the house **Sport**—enjoy; make merry. **Am possest**—am in possession of everything belonging to Volpone. **Needs be dead afore his time**—wants to be declared as dead before he actually dies. **Bury him**—declare him dead **Gain by him** profit by the declaration of his death. **So will keep me**—I will maintain myself as the successor to all the wealth and property of Volpone. **Share at least**—at least agrees to share his wealth and property with me. **Gozen**—cheat or rob **Well placed**—well deserved or placed in an advantageous position. **Construe**—regard. **His sport pay for it**—let his fun of putting on the disguise of a clarissimo make him pay the penalty of losing all his property and wealth. **The Fox-trap**—the trap for betraying Volpone.

Scene VI.

Maintain our first tale good—i.e., should not contradict our previous statements. **Mine is no tale**-my statement is not a story but a fact. **The sudden good dropt down upon you**—an unexpected fortune bestowed upon you. **Arrant knave**—positive scoundrel **Varlet**—rogue. **You mock—the world**—you are making a fool of us. **Harlot**—prostitute. **Belike**—perhaps.

Over-leavened—unduly puffed up or swollen with pride. **Wien-yat**—a skin bag for holding wine. **A very woman**—i.e., a fickle and treacherous woman. **Acknown**—acknowledged **Gamesters**—gamblers. **Dessemble**—pretend or tell lies. **Vulture**-i.e., Voltore. **Having his beak up in the air**—i.e, smelling the death of Volpone just as the vultures smell the dead bodies from a long distance. **Snuffing**—smelling.

Scene VII.

Outstript—outwitted. **A parasite** i.e., Mosca. **Run on errands**—carry messages or do some menial job. **Make legs**—bow slavishly. **Crumbs**—small particles of food. **Understand the fingering**—knows the art of manipulating i.e., proving truth as falsehood, and falsehood as truth.

Suitor to your worship—i.e., beg your favour. **Tenement**—house. **Out of reparations**—i.e., beyond repair. **Customed**—i.e., popular.

Bawdy-house—brothel. **None dispraised**—none talked ill of that brothel. **Fell with him**—fell into ruins along with his death. (Volpone's death), **Prating**—idle talk. **Give me but your hand**—i.e., give me a promise. **I have done**—I will not talk anymore. **A mere toy**—a trifling thing.

Candle-rents—nominal rent i e., very petty rent. **God decrease it**—May God decrease your wealth because you have inherited so much of wealth. Of course, Volpone purposely says this either out of spite and jealousy or just to annoy Voltore. **Mistaking knave**—wrongly informed rascal. **Would it were more**—I wish you had inherited more wealth. **To my first again**—let me go and tease again the person whom I had met first.

Scene VIII.

Impudent—impertinent. **Varlet**—rascal or rogue. **Shoot mine eyes at him gun stones**—hit him hard with my glances just like bullets. **Afflict**—torture, tease painfully. **A board of your grave length**—a man of your advanced age. **Over-reached**—outwitted. **Brooked**—tolerated. **That parasite's hair**—i. e., Mosca's impudence. **His nose should cozen**—his looks or gestures would be so treacherous. **Promise**—indicate.

Bane - ruin. **Traded in the world**—experienced in the ways of the world. **Moral emblems** moral significance. **Dropped your cheese** —resigned all your wealth and property. **The Fox** – i.e. Volpone. **Emptiness** —stupidity. **Sirrah**—a contemptuous form of address, corresponding to 'fellow'. **The privilege of the place** - i e a public street. **Red saucy cap**—i e. the sergeant's cap.

Jolt-head —shaking or palsied head. **Chequines**—shining buttons. **Warrant your abuses**—give the liberty of using any abusive language. **Published what you are**—declared that you are a cuckold or the husband of a faithless wife.

Tarry - wait. **Distracted**—mad. **Infected**—corrupt. **Breathes**—lives. **Fly him** —chase him. **Basilisk**—a venomous serpent that can make its victim motionless by its very looks or glances.

Scene IX.

Flesh-fly -a fly that feeds on flesh. **Summer**--good days. **Winter**—bad days. **Rail**—abuse. **Out of place**—i.e. without any reason. **Solecism**—act of impropriety. **Madam**—Lady Politick.

Beggin—a lawyer's cap. **Some familiar**—some attendant. **In truth** —truly. **Justinian** —an authority on law. **A mule that never read Justinian**—i.e a person who is a perfectly ignorant of law, i.e. Mosca. **Ride an advocate** —outwit a lawyer. **Quirk** —trick. **Gullage** --befooling. **Such a creature** - i.e. Mosca. **Confederacy**—conspiracy. **Blind the rest** —mislead or deceive other candidates for Volpone's wealth and property. **Officious** —interpreting. **Torment**—torture. **Cozened**—cheated.

Scene X.

Bringing them forth to sentence—award punishment to them. **Win upon your justice**—override your sense of

justice. **You fatherhoods**—i.e., you the honourable judges. **These innocents**—i.e., Bonario and Celia. **Betray himself**—reveal the whole secret **Abused**—deceived sadly. **Covetous ends**—greedy purposes. **Possest**—possessed by an evil spirit **Struck in conscience**—i.e , feeling repentant. **Your offended feet**—at the feet of Bonario and Celia whom I have deceived or wronged seriously. **Caught in my own noose**—caught in my own trap. **Noose**—a rope for strangling a person.

Be constant—i.e., do not contradict our former statements. **Nought**—nothing. **Impudence**—bare-facedness. **Instrument**—cause. **Grave fathers**—reverned judges. **Distracted**—mad or deranged in the brain. **Sure vengeannce**—inevitable justice.

Gaped for—desired to possess. **Some deal** to some extent. **Modesty**—frankness and sincerity. **Confer them**—read carefully the notes. **Bides**—dwells. **Estate**—property or wealth. **Labyrinth**—i.e., a mystery. **Stand you**—do you stick to ? **Report**—statement. **At the stake**—in great danger. **A forked tongue**—i.e., a tongue that speaks truth and falsehood at the same time. **Credit**—believe. **The false spirit**—i.e., the evil spirit which has possessed Voltore.

Scene XI.

Mere wantonness—sheer playfulness. **The dull devil**—the stupid mischievous spirit. **Devised**—planned. **Gave it second**—i.e., approved it **Scar up this vein**—i.e , stop this bleeding. **Bleed dead**—bleed to death. **Kitlings**—young ones of cats i.e., kittens. **Further in**—further involved in danger. **Fine conceits**—strange fancies. **Soberly**—with due control.

Crochets—whims or strange fancies **Conundrums**—whims ; fancies **His meaning may be truer than my fear**—he may be intending to do me greater injury than I am suspecting. **Unscrew and adovcate**—change the plan in

order to help Mosca with a portion of my wealth and property. **Upon new hopes**—promising new prospects of fortune to Mosca. **Provoked**—excited his anger. **Lost myself**—ruined myself.

Scene XII.

Reconciled—defended. **The gentleman**—i.e., Bonario. **The gentlwoman**—i.e Celia. **How ready is heaven**—how willing is God. **Ravished her**—molested her. **Impotence**—sexual incapacity. **Possession**—possession by an evil spirit. **Obsession**—an idea which haunts or occupies the mind constantly but here it means attack by the evil spirit which possesses a human body. **Some other name**—a different name for Mosca because parasite is an insulting name for a big man like Mosca.

Misty—confusing. **His master**—i.e. Volpone. **Still the man**—still the man to be selected as the successor to Volpone. **Your hopes the same** - your hope to inherit Volpone's wealth should not decrease. **This was only a jest**—all that has happened so far was merely a joke. **To try**—to test. **Firm**—determined in your stand. **Stood affected**—was influenced. **Do I live?** i.e., I am no other than Volpone himself in the guise of a clarissimo or sergeant-at-law.

Too violent—too rude or ungentle in behaviour. **Redeem**—compensate. **Seem so** - appear to be possessed by an evil spirit. **Make it good**—make your fainting-fit. appear as real. **Swell**--inflate or swell your body or belly. **Poulter**—poulterer or one dealing in poultry, i.e., fowl and other eatable birds.

Mouth is running away—mouth is getting twisted because of his fainting-fit due to the possession by an evil spirit. **Manifest**—clearly visible. **Comes to himself**—comes back to his senses. **Dispossest**—freed from the evil spirit. **Forswear** - solemnly deny.

My hand—my handwriting. **O practice**—all this is a

conspiracy. **Maze**—a mystery or a confusion. **Subtler**—more mysterious. **Proper man**—handsome person. **Match for my daughter**—fit to be my son-in-law. **On the hinge again**—again in a critical position.

Busy knave—interfering rogue i.e., Volpone in the guise of a sergeant. **Your grave pleasures**—the company of your honourable selves i.e., the judges. **Cozen me of all**—rob me of all my property. **Intricate**—complicated or mysterious. **I will be hanged**—I am prepared to lose my life if I do not give you half of my property.

Afford it you so cheap—I cannot agree to part with my property on such cheap terms. **With all good stars my enemies**—with all my good luck turned into bad luck. **Insolence**—insulting attitude. **Bear himself**—behave himself. **A person of rank**—i.e., Mosca. **Allied anon**—united soon. **Uncase**—remove the disguise. **Your match**—your marriage with the daughter of the judges.

Hinder—oppose. **Substance**—fortune. **Glue you**—i.e., stick to you or make you fortunate. **Screw you into a family**—help you in getting married to the daughter of a judge and thereby start a decent family life. **His own knave**—he is himself a rogue.

Avarice's fool—victim of greed. **A chimera of wittol**—i.e., an inconceivable fool. **The knot**—the mystery. **Undone**—solved. **By miracle**—by a strange accident. **Gross**—foul. **The highway to get riches**—the easiest way to become wealthy. **Torment**—great pain. **Possess them**—greed or lust for wealth stick to persons who possess wealth, i.e., those who are already rich want to grow richer.

Disrobe—take of the false garments of a nobleman or magnifico. **Aught**—anything. **To stay the course of justice**—to prevent law from realising its penalties. **Suing for the guilty**—begging mercy for the guilty persons. **Minister**—agent or cause. **Lewd impostures**—wicked acts of cheating. **Impudence**—impertinence.

Abused—insulted. **Habit**—dress. **Birth or blood**—i.e., respectability. **Gallies**—boats in which slaves are made to work day and night.

Bane—poison i.e., death by poisoning. **Wolvish nature**—i.e., extremely cruel nature.

Deliver—hand over. **Safir**—bailiff.

Like censure—similar puuishment i.e., punishment awarded to Mosca. **Substance**—wealth and property. **Confiscate**—transferred.

Incurabili—incurable diseases or patients. **Imposure**—pretension. **Feigning**—pretending. **Gout**—painful rheumatism. **Palsy**—paralysis. **Cramped with irons**—tied with iron chains.

Mortifying—repentance. **Their fellowship**—the association of lawyers **Embarked**—removed. **Stinking**—smelling. **Bruised**—smashed. **Expiate**—make amends or compensation. **Trebled**—made three times. **Revoked**—repealed or withdrawn or cancelled. **Seasoning**—interest or excellence. **Applause**—praise. **Censure** blame or punish. **Jovially**—joyfully. **Clap your hands**—express your approval and also your praise.

Questions & Answers

(Complete revision of the Drama.)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What is the function of Prologue at the beginning of the play.

Ans. A Prologue is an introduction to a play, usually in verse. It was in vogue in the time of Jonson. Shakespeare, however, rarely made use of it. It was a custom with the ancient Roman writers of comedies; naturally Jonson who is a classicist, would follow it. The Roman writers of comedies often prefixed to their plays a prologue, in which the favour of the audience was solicited. Among the Elizabethan dramatists the prologue was often used to explain the scope and purpose of the play, or if the prologue came in between the scenes of the play, it was made to throw light on the action and characters of the play, But in the prologue to *Volpone* Jonson vindicates of his own position in the dramatic world. His aim, as he states here, is "to mix porfit with pleasure" in *Volpone*. He defends his own way of writing and protests against the view held about him that satire is all that he writes, or that he takes a long time in writing a play. Nor does he introduce into his plays any burlesque, and odds and ends of old plays, and artificial and inflated action. His aim is "quick comedy refined". He observes in his comedy the unities of time, place and action. All that he does to give piquancy to his writing, keeping out of it rancour or ill-will. His purpose is to excite laughter in his audience.

The Prologue sets forth the aim or purpose of the play. The practice of Roman writers of comedies is but followed here by Jonson. *Volpone* has a satirical purpose, but it needs to be justified. "All that he writes is railing"—that is the charge brought against Jonson. Jonson, therefore needs then to vindicate himself. He holds up to ridicule the follies and vices of society, and his purpose is certainly moral, but he combines with it a desire to please and amuse the audience. "To mix profit with pleasure" in due measure is the aim, pursued in his satirical plays. So it is not mere vituperation that his plays come to, as it is wrongly complained.

The full complement of wit and humour gives a new character to his satire—and half of its sting is gone. We cannot say then all that he writes is railing. Characters may be mostly villains, but it is the author's delectable wit that makes them less reprehensible than they should be. This seems to be very true of Volpone and his parasite, Mosca. The legacy-hunters with whom they sport are certainly despicable, and while we laugh at them, as we must do against the context of wit and humour, we cannot but condemn them. There, the moral intention of the author is carried into effect.

Jonson also defends himself against the charge that he usually takes too long a time in writing a play. This he shows to be totally unfounded. He has taken no more than five weeks in writing the play, and challenges anybody to improve upon it. Nor does he admit into his play any burlesque such a bodily lifting a city feast in which many foolish tricks are played in the breaking of eggs and sharing out of an immense custard. Nor does he introduce a gull reciting odds and ends, or make use of stale, time-worn jests. He attempts genuine comedy with plenty of life in it, and no vulgarizing, in which unities of time, place and action are observed, and satire is lightened with wit and humour. The prologue is a vindication of the style and manner of *Volpone* and of its moral purpose too.

Q. Analyse the speech of Volpone, showing what light it throws on the aim and purpose of the play.

Ans. Volpone first greets the day and then his gold, in which he revels. Poets too, as Volpone says, have paid tribute to gold by designating the best age as the golden age, and by ascribing golden looks to Venus. Riches, the dumb god, gives man power. Gold is the price of souls—men can be bought and sold for gold. Hell, if it contains gold, would be worth heaven. Gold is virtue, fame, honour, and everything else. Mosca now and then adds a word or two to encourage Volpone to go on in his true

vein. He tells us that he has his own way of increasing his wealth, which is commended by Mosca as innocent and commendable for he dispossesses no heir, and preys upon no widows and orphans. And Mosca also praises Volpone for being little niggardly towards himself, as he knows how to enjoy himself. Volpone gives Mosca money for his praises, and bids him get together his dwarf, his eunuch, and his fool to make him sport. Now we learn that Volpone, having had no wife, no parent, no child, or friend to whom he can give away his wealth, is being daily visited by men and women with presents with hope that one day when he dies, one of them might get either part or whole of his wealth, each working against the other. And Volpone finds it to his interest to keep them suspended in hope.

Mosca brings in Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone. The sport they make is an exposition of Pythagoras's doctrine of transmigration of souls. He is called the juggler divine, whose soul first came from Apollo, and was put into Aethalides; when it was lodged in Aethalides, it could remember all its past experience; then the soul passed to Euphorbus, who was killed at the siege of Troy by Menelaus; Hermotimus was the next possessor of the soul, and from his it passed to Pyrrhus to Delos, and then it entered the boy of Pythagoras, the sophist of Greece. From Pythagoras the soul went to Aspasia, and from Aspasia it returned to the philosopher. The soul went round kings, knights, beggars, knaves, lords and fools, and even sojourned among beasts—ox, ass, mule, goat, badger, as it has been told by the cobbler, Mycillus As this discourse between Nano and Androgyno goes on, the Reformation and the Puritans come in for their share of attack. Then Nano and Castrone sing a song, glorifying the fool. There is a knocking without. The men making sport for Volpone are dismissed. It is Voltore, an advocate, who knocks, and before he is admitted, Volpone has to put on his gown, furs and night caps, and lie down on his couch, feigning sickness. Mosca tells Volpone that the visitor brings a

plate. Both make fun, trying to conjecture the thoughts passing through the mind of Voltore. They are going to make a fool of him—which puts them in high spirit.

Soon Mosca brings in Voltore, telling him on the way that Volpone favours him above all others. Volpone plays his part well, pretending to be partly short of hearing and very feeble in voice, and exchanges but a few words with Voltore, by which the latter is encouragde to hope for the best. In the presence of Volpone who is supposed to be short of hearing, Mosca bids Voltore be of good cheer, and tells him that he is Volpone's heir and all the time Volpone keeps groaning. Mosca assures Voltore that he has been set down as his heir, and begs that he himself (Mosca) might be included as a member of Voltore's family, and holds up before him Volpone's keys, saying that he is keeping the coffers and caskets and jewels all for Volotre. Voltore wants to be sure that he is the soul heir, and Mosca says yes. Mosca ironically praises his legal talent which can argue for and against a thing and which has won the admiration of his master, and this is the reason, he tells Voltore, why he has been chosen heir Then he suddenly warns Voltore that somebody is knocking, and begs him to depart, promising to bring him the inventory of goods and the copy of the will. Volpone springs up from his bed as soon as Voltore is gone, but Mosca begs him to take to his bed again for Corbaccio is waiting to see him.

Corbaccio enters, and inquires about the health of Volpone, and is told by Mosca that his master is getting worse. Corbaccio has brought some drug that will give Volpone good sleep. Mosca is aware that it is the drug to put Volpone to eternal sleep, and tells Corbaccio that Volpone has no faith in medicine and damns all doctors as a class. He hears in detail the change for the worse that has been coming upon Volpone, and Mosca purposely tells the story to delude Corbaccio (who is very stupid, compared to Voltore) with the hope that Volpone is dying, and that he may be chosen his heir. Mosca tells him that

Volpone has not yet made his will, but Corbaccio noticed the lawyer (Voltore) departing from the house. Mosca points to the plate, presented by Voltore, and gives Corbaccio to understand that the lawyer was summoned to make the will, but Corbaccio has now the suspicion that the lawyer has a design to be the heir, and he is going to forestall him, and presents a bag of money (chequins, Italian gold coins). Mosca cries out that gold is a good cordial which will revive Volpone, and then Corbaccio holds back the bag, and Mosca will not have it so. Mosca persuades him to believe that Volpone on his recovery from the first fit will make his will when Mosca is going to show him the bag of money, presented by him. Mosca advises Corbaccio in the meantime to make his own will, putting Volpone as his heir in place of his son, and send the will to him. What he is going to do is to put Corbaccio's will before Volpone when the latter will make his will. This is a device which takes Corbaccio's fancy, and he claims that he has already thought of this very device. And so Corbaccio is dismissed. Volpone again springs up from his couch. He is bursting with laughter which he has restrained till now with great difficulty. He admires the ingenuity of Mosca. He comments on avarice so active in an old man like Corbaccio. There is another knocking, and Volpone takes to his couch again.

Now enters Corvino. Mosca tells Corvino that Volpone is very near to death, but when Corvino announces that he has brought a pearl, Volpone seems to revive and faintly calls for Corvino. He pretends to be deaf again, and makes no reply to Corvino's greering. He puts his pearl into Volpone's hand. When he asks Mosca whether he has been made his heir, Mosca will not show him the will until Volpone is dead and tells him how he has been lately besieged by Voltore, Corbaccio and others. But as Volpone has been mumbling his name (Corvino), as Mosca tells him, he puts pen and paper before him, and Volpone would have none else as his heir than Corvino, and so Mosca has dismissed all others for they have not the shadow of a

chance. They talk in the presence of Mosca, and Corvino is assured that Volpone can neither hear nor see. He is informed too that Volpone has no children, but bastards, born of gypsies, Jews and blackamoors, and that the dwarf, the fool, the eunuch are all his children to whom he has given nothing. He then whispers to Volpone that he should carry on his feint in a more convincing manner, while he begs Corvino to draw nearer. Then they both go on running down Volpone, Mosca expressing a wish that he might stifle him with a pillow, in which he is seconded by Corvino. Corvino wishes that he would take back his pearl. Why should he worry ?—asks Mosca. The pearl is already his, and all that belongs to Volpone. Corvino begins to praise Mosca as his friend, companion and partner, and promises that Mosca will share in his fortunes too. Mosca piquantly adds that he may share in all his fortunes except in his gallent wife—and the hint sends away Corvino at once. There is one more knocking. It is Lady would-be, Sir Politick's wife. Volpone is not going to see her at the moment. He wonders at the desperate valour of the English who let loose their wives upon all. Mosca mentions by the way that Corvino's wife has more attractive face than this English lady. Volpone wants to have a look at her, but Mosca tells him that she is always very closely guarded, and not permitted out of doors except a peeping out of the window now and then. Volpone plans to see her, and will put on some disguise for the purpose.

Critical Note. The first Act, a continuous one as it is (though it is divided into scenes in some edition), is well planned, and puts us it possession of the drift of the play, and also gives a hint about the catastrophe to follow—and this to rise from Volpone's being enamoured of Corvino's wife. Volpone is a worshipper of gold, but he is not the object of satire; those who are attracted by his gold are held up to ridicule.. The game starts in the first Act. Here again it is to be noted that each character is individualised from the other, and that the device is accordingly

adapted and varied. It needs considerable ingenuity on the part of Mosca. All the amusement arises from the tricks of Mosca, while they are interesting because they are also the means of revealing the characters.

Volpone's apostrophe to gold is the finest essence of satire in the opening scene:

> Riches, the dumb gold, that giv'st all men tongues,
> That canst do nought, and yet mak'st men do all things;
> The price of souls; even hell, with there to boot,
> Is made worth heaven.

Here Jonson strikes the keynote to the play.

Then immediately after the objective of the play begins to be executed. First comes Voltore, an advocate. Each name has a meaning. And Volpone rightly classes them off:

> Vulture, kite,
> Raven, and gorcrow, all my birds of prey,
> That think me turning carcase, now they come;
> I am not for them yet.

Voltore is a vulture. A lawyer, he must be a shrewd fellow, but Mosca easily dupes him. Greed makes a man blind. The satire upon a lawyer is here noteworthy. It is put in the mouth of Mosca:

> I oft have heard him say how he admired
> Men of your large profession, that could speak
> To every cause, and things mere contraries,
> Till they are hoarse again, yet all be law;
> That, with most quick agility, could turn,
> And return; make knots, and undo them;
> Give forked counsel; take provoking gold
> On either hand, and put it up; these men,
> He knew, would thrive with their humility.

These lines are charged with subtle irony.

When Voltore is gone, there comes Corbaccio. Volpone says:

> The vuture's and the old raven's come.

Corbaccio means a raven. They are all designated by names of rapacious birds. Corvino who follows next, is the "gorcrow," referred to above. It is art that typifies avarice in its different forms in rapacious birds. The individuals ar also nicely differentiated. Corbaccio is old and a dotard. Mosca plays longer with him, and eaisly persuades him to will away his property to Volpone, disinheriting his son. A complication arises from this trick of Mosca's. Later, Corbaccio's son, Bonario, makes trouble, and a knot is woven that is not easily undone. The final catastrophe rests solely on Volpone. Dissension springs up among the characters, and it is the undoing of them.

The last visitor is Corvino. He is a little tough to deal with, but Mosca with his infinite resourcefulness manages it all right. Corvino seems to be convinced that he is preferred to all as heir. Mosca can send him away only when he hints about his wife being reserved for Corvino's personal self while he is ready to part with everything. Corvino's wife is to create the capital complication.

Volpone would not see at present the English lady, wife of Sir Politick Would-be. But there is incidentally a satire upon the English who let loose their wives. Mosca, however, thinks that Sir Politick Would-be runs little risk when his wife "hath not the face to be dishonest".

The jig (introduced in the first Act), in which Nano, Castrone and Androgyno take part has also its satirical points: (1) it satirizes the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; (2) the Church of England, the Calvinists and Puritans all come in for their share of attack. The interest is sustained throughout the Act in spite of all diversity.

Volpone at the opening of the play, greets the morning and his gold. His speech seems to be an apotheosis of gold. Gold is the world's soul. It seems to eclipse the brightness of the Sun, or Sol—and Sol is the father of gold. Wise poets sing the praises of the golden age, and the golden age is the best age that man can conceive on earth. Gold is the motive power behind the action of man. Gold is dumb, but it gives all men tongues, and while itself can do nothing, it makes men do all things. Gold is the price of souls—men can be bought and sold for gold. Gold would make hell even as good as heaven, Virtue and honour are but the reflexes of gold.

Since gold sways the impulses and actions of men, Volpone exploits man's love of gold. He is just gulling the avaricious—and it is the way to teach them a lesson. The play is a satire upon avarice, and all the fun rises from the systematic and deliberate gulling of the fortune-hunters throughout the play, in which Volpone and Mosca are most actively engaged and interested. Volpone and Mosca are villains, but they are not the objects of ridicule as their victims. Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino are. The characters are made to suggest the birds after which they are named—Vulture, Raven and Crow. Their greed is revealed in all its baseness, and it is made abominable.

Q. What is the purpose of the jig, introduced in the first Act ?

Ans. In the jig Volpone's retainers, Nano, a dwarf, Androgyno, a hermaphrodite and Castrone, a eunuch, take part. A jig is usually a merry ballad or tune; here a fanciful dialogue of light comic act introduced at the end or during an interlude of a play. The ostensible purpose of the jig is the ridicule of Pythagoras's doctrine of *metempsychosis* or transmigration of souls. The point is whether it has anything to do with the play itself. The first thing it does is to fill in the interval before the visitors come. If there is any dramatic purpose, it is that which a

brief outline of action—the coming of visitors, men and women, with presents every day, with an eye on the property of Volpone is suggested, a little pause is allowed before we see how Mosca, Volpone's agent, is going to act with these visitors. Secondly, the jig provides some amusements to Volpone. It is he who calls upon his men to make him some sport. Nano traces the journey of the soul of Pythagoras until it seems to have lodged Androgyno, as Nano makes it out to be. Androgyno, being a hermaphrodite, enjoys the delight of each sex, with which he seems to be fed up; it is the role of a fool that satisfies him best now. Then Nano and Castrone sing the praises of a fool. After the preliminary, or what is technically called *exposition*, has been attended to, Jonson allows a short interval, which is filled in by the jig before the action of the play begins—and it begins with the coming of the visitors with gifts to win the goodwill of Volpone so that he might make one of them his heir.

Q. Mosca's rare ingenuity lies in adapting his tricks to the intelligence, temper and attitude of each visitor to Volpone. Illustrate.

Ans. The first visitor to Volpone is Voltore, a lawyer, and he must be a shrewd man and Mosca has to be a bit cautious in dealing with him. The p rt that Volpone is to play is to lie in his couch, and feign sickness, letting off a groan now and then, his senses failing so that he can see little of what is going on about him, and hear little of all that is said in his presence. Volpone exchanges but a few words with Voltore, and receives the plate that he brings, thanking him for the same, and begs him to see him often and be not far from him—and all this shows how much Volpone is interested in him. In his presence, for Volpone is supposed not to catch all their words. Voltore talks the matter over with Mosca, and Mosca persuades him to believe that he has the best chance of being chosen heir, as he is a lawyer, well practised in the gift of the gab, whom Volpone admires. Soon, Mosca is going to

bring him the inventory of goods and the copy of the will.

Next comes Corbaccio. Here is an old man, and a fool too. It is easier for Mosca to tackle him. Sometimes he mishears Mosca, and so Mosca has a little fun out of him by his open comments on him that we hear. Corbaccio brings a sleeping drug for Volpone, and Volpone comments aside that it will put him to eternal sleep. Mosca tells Corbaccio that Volpone has no faith in medicine, and incidentally there is some satire upon a physician who has as much licence as a judge to kill, and can kill a judge too. Corbaccio offers a bag of gold coins. Mosca gives Corbaccio to understand that Volpone is in a stare of insensibility,and that when he recovers, he will present the bag of money, and persuade him to make the will. He advises Corbaccio to make his own will in favour of Volpone, disinheriting his own son, and send the same to him, which he is going to show to Volpone. Corbaccio readily agrees to it as the best means of securing the favour of Volpone.

After Corbaccio is gone, Volpone makes his comments in a pensive wistful tone. These comments apply to Corbaccio, but have a wider significance too. Old age is attended by so many cares and maladies, and death is often wished for; yet what a pathetic clinging to life all the time! He points to Corbaccio who is just gone home, full of confidence, hoping to give the lie to his old age and even to cheat fate.

The third visitor is Corvino. He is a bit tough, and Mosca has to tax his resources more to gull him. He is told that the will has been made and that he is the heir. But Mosca is not going to show him the will until Volpone is dead. Mosca wants him to believe that Volpone is gone crazy over him and would have none but him as his sole heir. But it is not easy to get rid of Corvino until Mosca alludes to his wife of whom Corvino is very jealous, and whom he always keeps under guard, and for whom Mosca pretends to have a craving.

Q. Comment on the satirical portraiture of Sir Politick Would-be by fully analysing his character in his conversation with Peregrine. What purpose does Peregrine serve here ?

Ans. Sir Politick would-be is drawn after Sir Henry Wotton, who was sent as ambassador to Venice in 1904, staying there till 1924. It is meant to be a caricature of a British diplomat. He comes into the play by the way— and has no important role. He is brought into contact with Peregrine, and Peregrine is not more than a medium, and Sir Politick is shown up in his scraps of conversation with Peregrine. Peregrine soon discovers that he is a pompous fool, and amuses himself with him, and Sir Politick is none the wiser for it. The first thing that Sir Politick tells Peregrine is that he is abroad with his wife just for widening his experience, and desires to hear the latest news from Peregrine. And he seems to be interested in such trivial and silly things as a raven building in a ship royal, the meteors that lately appeared as a portent, the porpoises seen above London Bridge, and Peregrine seems to humour him, and all his pretensions are exposed, and they are foolish pretensions. The whale that was discovered in London, he supposes, had been sent from Spain to scuttle the fleet of the English Merchant Adventures originally stationed at Hamburg (in Germany) until it shifted to Stade. He shows his inner knowledge by disclosing the precious secret to Peregrine that either Archduke Albert, Stadtholder of the Netherlands, or Ambrosio, Marchese of Spinola, who commanded the Spanish and Italian troops in the Netherlands must be responsible for the presence of the whale in London. All this profundity of silliness stems from his diplomatic experience and insight ! Peregrine laughs in his sleeve. He claims to have secret intelligence from the Netherlands, and affirms that Stone, the fool, reported to be dead by Peregrine, was an emissary in the service of the Netherlands. He tells Peregrine that Stone used to transmit secret information in cabbages, oranges, musk-melons,

apricots lemons, Colchester oysters, Selsey cockles, etc. Peregrine can only feign to be surprised at all this revelation. Sometimes Stone used to convey his secret messages in cipher in meat that was cut out, or in a tooth-pick. Peregrine wonders how Stone could do it when he could not read. Sir Politick replies that he was reported to be ignorant as a matter of policy, whereas he knew several languages. Then he tellls Peregrine that baboons were employed as spies and so also the Mamelukes. This is all news to Peregrine, and he is amused, and makes fun of Sir Politick, and Sir Politick is made to reveal more and more of his fantastic silliness. Peregrine commends his profound knowledge ("It seems, sir, you know all"), and Sir Politick takes credit for it, and offers to instruct Peregrine in the etiquette of polite society, for he has undertaken the same for "some great men's son's persons of blood and honour." When Volpone disguised as a mountebank, turns up there. Sir Politick displays his profound knowledge of an Italian mountebank, and while he listens to the address of Volpone, he makes his wise comments now and then to impress Peregrine, and Peregrine remains unconvinced. When Volpone is beaten up by Corvino, and chased away, Sir Politick has his own explanation to offer—it must be some plot of the State. The climax comes when Peregrine hunts that what has happened to the mountebank, might be the forerunner of a plot against Sir Politick himself. Sir Politick is scared at the idea. He is going to guard himself against the plot, and he has good reason to be supicious for his letters for the last three weeks have been intercepted. In Sir Politick we have the picture of a British diplomat with his fatuous intelligence, with his superstition, with his silly fancies and notions. Jonson's supreme talent for satire is revealed here in its exquisite finesse. Peregrine is not made to mock him openly, but his timely comments now and then make Sir Politick as ridiculous as he should be. It shows Jonson's mastery of the art of satire.

Q. Volpone's playing the part of a mountebank has an underlying satire. What is this? Do you think that Volpone is at all serious in his intention?

Ans. In playing the part of a mountebank Volpone's ostensible purpose is to have a look at Celia, wife of Corvino and a reputed beauty. He says at the end of the first Act, "I will go see her, though but at her window." He has heard that she is not allowed to step out of doors, that she is closely guarded. It may be doubted whether he is very much interested in Celia herself, but we may well believe that he wants to spite Corvino. And then it is a triumph for him when Corvino who has so jealously guarded his wife and begins to rave about his honour after he discovers his wife standing at the window and dropping her handkerchief to the mountebank who addresses a vulgar crowd, offers to bring his wife for the pleasure of Volpone, as we see him doing at the end of the second Act.

This is all that Volpone's masquerading a mountebank leads to. Of course the credit should go to Mosca. Volpone pretends to Mosca that he is desperately in love with Celia, and Mosca, just to humour his master, devises a plan to bring Celia to Volpone. Mosca is always good at tricks; and it is an easy thing to do what Volpone desires. He goes to Corvino and reports to him that Volpone has been revived by an oil bought of the mountebank by Corbaccio and Voltore. And then one of the doctors, consulted about Volpone, offered to bring his daughter for the service of Volpone, which would restore him to full health and vigour. And that is the crux of the matter. Corvino must decide at once. He cannot be behind hand. He easily argues out the case:

> In the point of honour.
> The cases are all one of wife and daughter.

He might as well offer his wife for service of Volpone. His honour proves to be quite elastic. It appears then that Volpone's part as a mountebank has a meaning of its own.

It clinches the satire upon general avarice. Corvino's honour and his wife's honour too are easily subordinated to his master-passion.

The mountebank episode is also a satire upon the credulity of the age. Sir Politick's estimate of an Italian mountebank is not altogether misplaced. Then the story that Volpone tells of Scoto is full of meaning. People in that age had a profound faith in the nostrums of a mountebank, and a mountebank in those days was credited with curing all incurable diseases with his recipes. So, it is a satire upon the ignorance and credulity of the age.

Q. In the last scene of the Act the full charge of satire is directed against the unpronounced avarice of Corvino, while there is deep latent irony in it. Elucidate.

Ans. Corvino is furious and takes his wife severely to task for being so indiscreet as to stand at the window in the presence of a gaping crowd whom a mountebank addressed. He is in fact more vulgar than the crowd he imagines to be. He heaps all the vilest abuses upon his wife, and she is patient, and makes little protest. He raves about his honour which has been brought so low by the conduct of his wife. He insinuates that she would like to have close dealings with the mountebank, while she was quite free of her presence with gaping multitude, and she dropped too a handkerchief in which a letter might as well have been tossed to her, making an assignation. She might invite the mountebank for massaging her, which, he insinuates, she evidently seems to desire. He will not spare her; he must avenge his dishonour. He forbids the window to her, and he is going to seal it up. He assigns to the back part of the house—no more getting out of doors for her, not even going to church which she has been permitted so long. So, he goes on fuming and raving, when he is interrupted by the coming of Mosca.

Mosca brings him the startling news that Volpone is

reviving under the action of the oil, bought of the mountebank by Corbaccio and Voltore, and that doctors have been called, one of them offering his daughter for the service of Volpone. A young woman is all that Volpone needs at present to restore him to youth and vigour. It takes Corvino a minute or two to decide that he will offer his wife for the purpose. A little while ago he raved about his honour. Now he vindicates his honour by proposing to bring to Volpone his very wife whose honour he has till now so jealously guarded. There's the limit! There could have been no more ruthless satire upon avarice. A wife's honour about which a husband is particularly sensitive, counts little when it is a matter of gold. Gold is the vindication of all honour. The central theme of the play is projected in this scene. Then the irony running through it is very striking. A few minutes ago he is so solicitous of his honour—he even threatens a vendetta in vindication of his honour:

> that the murder
> Of father, mothar, brother, all thy race,
> Should follow, as the subject of my justice,

and then when he meets Mosca and hears what he has to tell about Volpone being recovered with the aid of a young woman, all adieu to his honour!

Q. What is the dramatic purpose of Mosca's self-exaltation with which the first scene opens?

Ans. Mosca is filled with a sense of his own importance at the success of his plans till now. He seems to be growing in love with his dear self. It is success that has turned his head. He is but a parasite, but he feels that he is different from many other parasites. He thinks himself to be a genius. He has cultivated and perfected the art of parasitism. And he easily commands success. The scene opens with the soliloquy of Mosca's.

Then comes in Bonario. Of course he thinks that it is no trouble to deal with him. Mosca is going to make use

of him. Bonario at first holds off from him—he looks down upon him as a parasite. Mosca manages to win him over by a clever ruse. Bonario is moved by Mosca's tears, when he pleads for his poverty in accepting the position of a parasite, but has consciously avoided doing harm to anybody. Next he tells Bonario the story that his father, with the intention of disinheriting him, is expected to be at Volpone's with his new will. Bonario can hardly credit the story, but is persuaded to conceal himself in a closet in order to watch and overhear when his father comes to see Volpone. So far Mosca manages things all right. In the meantime he returns to Volpone and gets rid of Lady Would-be who has been annoying Volpone. But trouble begins with the coming of Corvino with his wife, before he has been sent for. And this upsets the plan of Mosca. Everything seems to go wrong now. Corvino alternately entreats and bullies his wife, but it has little effect, until he is persuaded by Mosca to leave his wife there. Mosca, appeals to, and tempts Celia, but Celia is adamant. Then he forcibly seizes upon her, and Bonario rushes in and rescues her, and leads her away. This episode is fraught with serious consequences which are little realized either by Mosca or by Volpone. The dramatic significance of Mosca's self-exaltation at the opening of the scene is the herfiguring of the disaster to come. Mosca's self-exaltation pas an ironic content.

Q. Lady Would-be's visit to Volpone seems to be inadequately motivated. If anything, it has a nuisance value. Discuss.

Ans. Neither Sir Politick nor his wife seems to have a design upon Volpone's property. They cannot certainly be classed with the legacy-hunters, frequenting the house. At the end of the first Act, we find Lady Would-be calling on Volpone, but she is not admitted and is told that she might call "some three hours hence'. In any case Volpone does not seem to be interested in Lady Would-be, but in Celia, Corvino's wife who is a reputed beauty, as he is told

by Mosca. But we fail to understand why Lady Would-be is interested in Volpone. Peregrine's comment may be recalled here :

> Your lady
> Lies here in Venice, for intelligence
> Of tires and fashions, and behaviour,
> Among the courtesans ? The fine Lady Would-be ?

Lady Would-be should be understandably frequenting brothels, but why should she be visiting Volpone ? There seems to be no adequate reason except her fancy. She does not seem to be either interested in inspiring passion in Volpone's heart. What Mosca says about her should be noted : "She has not yet the face to be dishonest." She cannot then have anything to do with illicit love. The introduction of Lady Would-be in this scene seems to be a weak point. When Sir Politick is satirized as an English diplomat, is the English diplomat's wife now brought before us ? If it be so, she is more generously treated than her husband—at least she talks more sensibly and airs her knowledge of art and literature, which is sound.

What is of immediate interest is the annoyance that she causes to Volpone by her presence and incessant talk. He is almost driven to desperation. According to Volpone's estimate, she is nothing but a nuisance. Does she succeed in whetting his appetite for Celia, Corvino's wife, whom he has been expecting ? We may doubt, for Volpone himself says "that my loathing this will quite expel my appetite to the other." There seems to be no legitimate ground for bringing in Lady Would-be here, except for filling in the interval of time.

Q. Give an analysis of the ordeal that Celia faces. What does the defeat of Volpone in conquering Celia's will signify ? Does Volpone take defeat seriously to heart ?

Ans. Corvino first tells his wife that he is bringing her to Volpone's feast and desires her to dress at her best

and put on her jewels. He is in a haste lest other candidates for Volpone's fortune might anticipate him. It rather upsets Mosca's plans. Mosca has already had Bonario on hand, and has shoved him on into a closet to watch for his father (Corbaccio) who is going to bring his will, one at a time. If Corvino had waited till he had been sent for by Mosca at a convenient time, he might have managed things better. Corbaccio should have arrived with his will now while Bonario had been waiting there. This would have suited Mosca's purpose best. He cannot, at this stage, keep Celia waiting. Volpone is impatient for her, and so Mosca has to bring her in.

Now Corvino has trouble with his wife. He cannot persuade her to be a party to his design—and this design of his upon Volpone's property he does not very clearly unfold to her. Celia assumes it to be a trial of her virtue since she has been lately accused of immodesty for having appeared at the window before the performing of mountebank—and begs to be excused from it. Corvino protests that he has no such purpose. He is not "horn-mad," as he puts it clinchingly. As the physicians have prescribed the remedy, he is just offering the service of his wife to Volpone. And it concerns his fortune too, and he insists that his wife should do her duty by being obedient to him. When his wife reminds him how he can part with honour in this matter, he scoffs at the very idea of honour :

> Honour ! Tut, a breath :
>
> There's no such thing in nature ; a mere term
> Invented to awe fools.

He tells her that she suffers no harm because Volpone is worn-out, decrepit wretch, and that nobody is going to have an inkling of the matter, and that if it were a sin, he would not have urged it at all. But Celia will not yield Corvino threatens her in vain. At last Mosca persuades him to leave her there by herself, for then she will yield.

Volpone springs up from his couch and makes love to her, promising her all riches, delicacies and luxuries of the world, if she will but give herself to him. Celia pleads that her mind is not one to be affected by these delights and that her innocence is all that she values, the loss of which will mean to her the loss of everything in the world. She appeals to his conscience. Volpone dismisses conscience as a beggar's virtue. He addresses her again and calls up the raptures of love that they can enjoy by figuring out Ovid's tales. Celia begs him to spare her by killing her. It would be better for him to feed his wrath upon her than his lust; for wrath speaks of manliness. Let him disfigure her beauty, if it has kindled his passion. Volpone at last loses his patience and seizes upon her forcibly. Then Bonario rushes in from his place of concealment, and leads her away, threatening Volpone with punishment in due time.

The ordeal that Celia goes through, does credit to her. It is the vindication of her virtue and honour, set against gross, all-prevailing greed that sways the hearts of so many. Greed appears in its vilest form in her husband who is ready to sacrifice his wife's virtue to it. It is a defeat of Corvino's purpose—and it is a defeat of Volpone's desire to possess her. Volpone might be a voluptuary, and if he has missed his chance with Celia, he may have a better chance with another woman. His defeat does not mean much to him—and he makes little of it as we see. His defeat signifies the triumph of Celia's virtue. While Jonson portrays the character and doings of Volpone and Mosca, villains as they are, in a more or less attractive manner, his moral purpose is asserted in this scene—Celia escapes from their villainy.

Q. Show that Mosca's ingenuity does not fail him when he has to deal with Voltore who comes unexpectedly upou Mosca talking to Corbaccio.

Ans. Corbaccio comes after Bonario has led away Celia. Mosca tells him a story that comes pat. Bonario

came a little while ago with sword drawn, looking for Corbaccio, having sensed the redrafting of the will in favour of Volpone—and threatened to kill both his father and Volpone. Now he seems to be satisfied that he has done the right thing in changing his will—and hands the will over to Mosca. He is now more interested to know how far Volpone is gone, and when he is told that Volpone may outlast May, he suggests that Mosca might poison him. Voltore who overhears their conversation, now comes up before him. Mosca who a moment ago declared that he was Corbaccio's only, has now to face Voltore who suspects him. Mosca is quite equal to the occasion. He tells Voltore the story of having brought Bonario there so that he might avenge himself upon his father for disinheriting him, and of Bonario later rushing upon Volpone when Celia, Corvino's wife, was with him and dragging her away. The position is that Bonario is going to charge Volpone with rape and denounce his father. Mosca unfolds his plan in Voltore's interest. Corbaccio wills away his property to Volpone; Bonario kills his father, if the plan goes through, and suffers punishment for it; the property of Corbaccio, joined to Volpone's at last comes to him.

Q. Why are Sir Politick and Peregrine introduced again in the first scene of the fourth Act? What bearing has it upon the plot of the play?

Ans. Sir Politick is satirized as a British diplomat. Peregrine who is not directly connected with the action, is always with Sir Politick. When we meet him, Peregrine, by his quite and ironical comment, exposes Sir Politick's vanity and folly. Here he speaks of projects which are so fantastic and which he propounds of Peregrine with an air of profound wisdom. First, he offers Peregrine a few instructions in social etiquette—and they are all trivial. It is meant to be a satire upon customary advice and counsel with which those visiting Italy in Jonson's days were usually loaded.

Sir Politick becomes more ridiculous when he expounds his projects to Peregrine. One of these projects is to supply the state of Venice with red herrings from Rotterdam. His second project is about restricting the use of tinder-boxes and enlarging their size so that they might not be used in setting fire to the Arsenal. It is pointed out that it is intended as a satire on the abuse of monopolies; encouraged by influential courtiers who filled their pockets by procuring patents for such monopolies. His third project is a process of disinfecting a ship coming from a plague-stricken area with onions. It must be a very simple, but, at the same time, ingenious process of disinfection. He brags of his potential power of selling Venice, if necessary, to the Turk despite her galleys (her naval power). He lets Peregrine peep into his dairy, and the details of daily life, recorded in it, are revealing.

The situation becomes intriguing when Lady Would-be appears there, accompanied by Nano and her two waiting women. And she supposes Peregrine in the company of her husband to be the very courtesan, as reported by Mosca, but only in male clothes. She does not directly challenge Peregrine, and the veiled words, addressed to him, are unintelligible to him. Nor can Sir Politick make any sense of her charge against him and the insinuations against his companion. Sir Politick at last goes away, and Peregrine is left behind. Peregrine's impression is that Sir Politick has thrown his wife at him by departing abruptly—and that he is but a pimp. And it seems to be confirmed by Lady Would-be's use of the word—snare. She is undeceived when Mosca comes there, and infroms her that the courtesan she is looking for, is under arrest.

This meeting between Sir Politick and his wife in the street, when the latter is on the information of Mosca, looking for him, falls pat into Mosca's plan. Bonario and Celia lodge their complaint with the court. Mosca gets Voltore to defend the case for the opposite party (Volpone as well as the legacy-hunters). He gets also Lady

Would-be to appear before the Court, persuading her to believe that the courtesan with whom her husband associated, is under arrest. Naturally Lady Would-be takes Celia to be the said courtesan concerned. This scene in which Lady Would-be finds her husband in the company of Peregrine whome she supposes to be the courtesan in male disguise, is thus vitally connected with the further development of the plot.

Q. Comment on the court-scene with referenee to the steps taken by Mosca to defeat the purpose of Bonario.

Ans. Celia proves intractable from the beginning. When she is left alone with Volpone, all his enticement fails, and then he seizes upon her at the moment Bonario rushes upon Volpone when he hears her cry. He leads her away, and threatens to have Volpone exposed and punished. It is all a bungle now. Mosca has to plan again to restore the normal situation. Corbaccio turns up after his son is gone, and hands the newmade will to Mosca. Voltore also turns up. Now Mosca knows that Voltore (lawyer) is the man to recoup the situation. He easily wheedles Voltore even when his suspicion is roused by the talk he overhears between Mosca and Corbaccio.

Voltore defends the case of Volpone in the Senate House. In the meantime Corbaccio and Corvino have been properly tutored for the evidence they are to give with the further assurance from Mosca that they are going to inherit Volpone's property. Voltore has been told the story of the fiasco in which Corvino's offering his wife to Volpone had ended, while his assistance has been sought in setting things right again. And Voltore has been more than assured that he alone will inherit Volpone's property together with Corbaccio's, now added to it. So, he displays all his zeal and legal skill in defending the case for Volpone. He tells the Court the story of Celia's adulterous

association with Bonario's which the husband has taken no serious notice of, and of Bonario's attempt to murder his father when he comes to know that his father is going to will away his property to Volpone, and to compromise Volpone too by bringing in his mistress (Celia) to his place. This story is confirmed by the evidence of Corbaccio and Corvino.

Voltore makes a lengthy speech; the evidence of Corbaccio and Corvino is brief and to the purpose. Corbaccio openly denounces and disowns his son for his vile course of life. Corvino knows no limit in reviling his wife as a common whore and makes no scruple about his cuckoldom. Then Mosca shows the wound he received from Bonario when he came to the help of his master who had been dragged out from his sick-couch. At last Lady Would-be is brought into charge Celia with having enticed her husband. The speech of Voltore and the evidence of the witnesses, and lastly that of Lady Would-be change the opinion of the Court, favourable inclined as it was to Bonario and Celia when it first heard their true story. They had no skilled lawyer to speak for them. Bonario was an impulsive youth, and the few comments that he made now and then, were tactless, and Celia was totally confounded to hear what her husband said, added to Voltore's elaborate slanderous attack upon her. Volpone is brought in lying sick and stiff on a couch, and easily impresses the Court in his favour. It is a nice delusion wrought upon the Court, and the case goes against Bonario and Celia. It is not Volpone who is convicted, as Bonario's purpose was. It meant the triumph of Mosca's counter-plan.

Q. Volpone's further plot to plague the legacy-hunters is going to rebound on his head, as there are hints of it. Is it not a dramatic necessity? What is revealed of Volpone's character here?

Ans. Volpone has a great sense of relief after being cleared of all blame (including the charge of attempted

rape) in the court. But he is not going to lie low. He has an irrepressible spirit of fun. He makes another plot to plague the legacy-hunters. He should have been at least kindly disposed to Voltore for pleading his case and saving him, from unpleasant consequences. But he will spare none. He has a gusto in afflicting these greedy fellows. The plot is still more ingenious than one before, but it is risky too. But Volpone is so carried away by his sheer love of fun that he does not realize the risk involved. He takes into his head to write out a will making Mosca his heir, and hand it over. He sends Nano and Castrone out into the streets to spread the report of his death. He has no idea that he makes his own position precarious by giving Mosca the upper hand.

By his directions Mosca seats himself at a table and makes up an inventory enumerating the items when the legacy-hunters call—and pays little heed to their demands. They have come running on hearing the report of Volpone's death. They ask nothing about Volpone, but it is the will they want to see. Mosca treats them very shabbily while at last he produces the will. They are bitterly disappointed when they learn that Mosca is the heir. Volpone watches the whole scene from behind a curtain, and makes necessary comments. He enjoys the fun very much, but he must have more fun and more mischief. There is now a supplementary plot. Mosca is to go out in the habit of a clarissimo, and Volpone disguised as a commandor or sergeant. And they will mock and spite the legacy-hunters in the public streets. They carry out the plan. And the result is that there is a reaction in Voltore who resolves to make a clean confession of the wrong done to Bonario and Celia. It is a move, unexpected by Volpone and Mosca, and the other legacy-hunters, who are also going to be compromised. It is a dramatic necessity because it brings on the final catastrophe. The point is rightly hit in Volpone's own comments :

To make a snare for mine own neck ! and run

My head into it, wilfully! with laughter!

He is also conscious that his love of fun has led to the disaster.

What is revealed of Volpone's character is that his love of fun counts more than wealth of which he has plenty and the reputation of being wealthy, which attracts the legacy-hunters. He fleeces these legacy-hunters no doubt, but he is more interested in making sport of them and exposing their greed, whatever it may cost him. Volpone is the satirist of the vice of greed. He says, "O, I will be a sharp disease unto them.,, Mosca warns him, "Sir, you must look for curses." Volpone replies, "The Fox fares ever best when he is curst."

Q. Sir Politick and Peregrine figure in a subplot. How is this sub-plot wound up?

Ans. A British diplomat (Sir Henry Wotton) is satirized in Sir Politick. He makes himself ridiculous by his pretensions, by airing his knowledge and insight in which he only reveals his stupidity. His silly and fantastic projects which he expounds to Peregrine show what fatuous ideas simmer in his brain. It is the business of Peregrine to hold him up to ridicule. In the scene in which Peregrine meets Lady Would-be, she leaves an unpleasant impression upon him. She chances upon her husband in the company of Peregrine when she in informed that he is with a courtesan of Venice. Sir Politick's wife whose level of intelligence cannot be much higher than his, thinks that this gentleman must be the courtesan in disguise. A diplomat's wife talks diplomatically to Peregrine with veiled allusions to one woman being wronged by another, and yet being not rude to the other when she comes upon the other. Peregrine can make nothing of this talk. Nor does her husband see what she is driving at. It seems to him at any rate that she has conceived a sudden prejudice against his companion—and he can-

not bring her to sense. His safest retreat is in flight. Lady Would-be is now left with Peregrine. And Peregrine suspects that she has been deliberately left there by her husband—in fact she has been thrown at him. The suspicion seems to be confirmed by the word, *snare*, used by Lady Would-be. He has so long thought of Sir Politick as a fool; now he seems to have a little of the knave too in his composition, and his wife seems to be a harlot, if anything else.

Peregrine wants to work off his pique against Sir Politick, for, as he thinks, he used his wife as a decoy. This scene marks the *denouement* of the sub-plot. Sir Politick is certainly innocent of a plot against Peregrine. But Peregrine teaches him a lesson—and it is a humiliation which everyone but Sir Politick would have smarted under. Peregrine disguised enters his house, accompanied by three merchants. He tells him that his late companion (Peregrine) has informed the senate against him about his plot to sell Venice to the Turk—and that he is a spy set on him. He advises Sir Politick to get into a sugar-chest or rush-basket, so as to be conveyed abroad. Sir Politick is scared, but he has his own device of safety. So he folds up his legs and puts himself into a crawling position, and has a tortoise-shell put upon his head by Peregrine. In the meantime the three merchants, shouting his name, rush in. They demand that if it is a tortoise (which Peregrine professes to have come to buy), the tortoise must creep. So Sir Politick is made to creep. The merchants pull off the shell and then he is discovered. Peregrine now discloses his identity, and says, 'Sir Pol, we are even.'' In the meantime Lady Would-be returns disappointed from Volpone's place. She wants to go on a sea-voyage to forget her disappointment. And the two leave Venice. Sir Politick has not been dragged into the game that Volpone and Mosca have been playing, but his wife later comes into it. Neither of them is intimately connected with the main action of the play. They form a kind of sub-plot. As the play is drawing to an end—and it will

mean the discomfiture of Volpone and Mosca and the whole lot of legacy-hunters; here is the winding up of the sub-plot with the defeat and humiliation of Sir Politick.

**Q. "There are my fine conceits
I must be merry, with a mischief to me !"**

What is the crisis referred to here? How do these comments of Volpone reflect on his character ?

Ans. See answer on page 416. The following points may be noted :—

(1) Volpone escapes the charge of attempted rape in the court, thanks to the pleading of Voltore. Mosca could not manage all right when Celia was brought to Volpone. The disaster was after all caused by Celia herself. She would not yield to him, and Bonario who was put into hiding by Mosca until his father was to come, rushed upon Volpone when he tried to seize upon Celia. If Bonario had been out of the way, nothing might have happened.

(2) The matter was then carried to the Court. Voltore, a legacy-hunter, was engaged by Mosca to plead for Volpone; the other legacy-hunters, Corvino and Corbaccio, were duly tutored by Mosca, and finally Lady Would-be was brought in to give evidence. The issue was decided against Bonario and Celia.

(3) Volpone should have drawn the line here but he wanted to go after the legacy-hunters again. Mosca was right in advising him :

We must here be fixed ;
Here we must rest, this our masterpiece ;
We cannot think to go beyond this.

Volpone should have now left the legacy-hunters alone. But his irresistible love of fun and mischief drew him on. He made a blunder in putting Mosca in possession of a will declaring him his heir and in getting a report spread

that he was dead. The legacy-hunters who come running to his house on hearing of his death, were mocked and jeered at by Mosca under Volpone's instruction, and finally shown the will. They went away disappointed. But they were not left alone. In the streets they were mocked again by Volpone disguised as a sergeant.

(4) Then the climax was reached in the Court scene. Voltore resolved to make a clean confession of everything. Volpone was landed in fresh troubles. He was present in the Court as a disguised sergeant. But Mosca held the trump card. He was now known to be Volpone's legal heir and he was respected as such by the Court. But he turned against Volpone. Voltore retracted his statement after he had played the part of being possessed by an evil spirit by following into a fit, and asserted that Volpone was living. Mosca would not have Volpone living again, and told the Court that he had just come after having ordered the funeral of his patron. He would come to no compromise with Volpone. After all he was going to lose his all. He now played his last stake. He threw off his disguise and openly denounced Mosca and the legacy-hunters.

(5) Volpone remained true to his character. His love of fun and mischief, his dominant passion to spite the legacy-hunters and expose ruthlessly their greed, remained supreme to the end. He made nothing of the loss of his property.

THE END

Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature

The Prologue
The Faerie Queene B.K. I
Paradise Lost Book I
Guide to Paradise Lost
Paradise Lost Book II
Lycidas
The Rape of the Lock
Pope (*B. R. Mullik*)
Doctor Faustus
Hamlet
King Lear
Twelfth Night
Tempest
Everyman in His Humour
Guide to Joseph Andrews
Fielding (*B. R. Mullik*)
Emma
Great Expectations (Text)
Adam Bede
The Prelude
Adonais
Eleven Odes
Andrea Del Sarto
Thyrsis
Matthew Arnold
Bacon's Essays
Gulliver's Travels (I & II)
Sartor Resartus
Guide to Mill 'On Liberty'
The Crown of Wild Olive
The Poetics

An Essay of Dramatic Poesy
The Function of Criticism & The Study of Poetry
Appreciations
Tradition and the Individual Talent, Milton I & II
Practical Criticism
An Apologie for Poetrie
Preface to Shakespeare
Scholar Gipsy
Volpone or the Fox
Childe Harold Canto III
M.A. English Papers (Punjab University)
Guide to Great Expectation
Shelley's Selected Poems
Master Guide to Tess of the D'urbervilles
Browning: Selected Poems
Guide to 'Longinus. 'On the Sublime'
Epithalamion & Prothalamion
Keats—B.R. Mullik. (*as Poet*)
Byron—*B.R. Mullik*
Keats's Hyperion
Ruskin—B.R. Mullik
Joseph Andrews—B.R. Mullik

Title Printed at Masood Printers 88 - McLeod Road, Lahore.